RELIGIOUS SOLITUDE

THE WORK OF AN

JTALIAN FATHER

OF THE ORDER OF THE

CAPUCINES.

TRANLATED FROM THE FLEMISH.

With ſome additions, out of other Authors.



AT BRUGES,
Printed by C. DE MOOR, & SON, in the Name JESUS. 1792.

WITH PERMISSION.

BRITISH MUSEUM 30 62 JUN

Son, coming to the Service of God, ſtand in Juſtice, & in fear, and prepare thy ſoul for Temtpation.
Ecclesisticus. Ch. 2d. *V.* 1.

Remember thy Lord Jesus Christ, was tempted in the deſert; & that the ſervant is not greater than his Maſter.

Bleſsed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the Crown of life. St. *James Ch.* 1st. *V.* 12.

DISTRIBUTION

OF TIME FOR THE

SPIRITUAL EXERCISE.

Riſe at the half hour after three.

Mattins half hour after four.

Half an hours Meditation at half hour after five.

Prime half hour after ſix.

Maſs. At ſeven ô clock.

Meditation for an hour. At 8 ô clock.

Reading for half an hour at the half after nine.

Sext & None at 10 ô clock.

Examen.

Dinner at half hour after ten.

Reading, during three quarters of an hour.

A viſit to the Bd. Sacrament at a quarter before 2.

Half an hours Conſideration. At 2 ô clock.

Veſpers at 3 ô clock.

A Med: for an hour at 4 ô clock.

Supper at five ô clock.

Complin at 7 ô clock.

On Faſting days, every thing is half an hour later; from after the morning Meditation at 8 ô clock.

It may be profitable each day to chooſe a ſaint for your Patron, & invoke him in the morning, and frequently in the day.

Alſo to unite your hours of prayer to the three hours during which Jesus hung on the Croſs; or to the time He ſpent in prayer in the Garden of Olives.

Sanctify your ſilence & your ſolitude, by uniting each day to ſome portion of our ſaviour's retirement.

For inſtance. The firſt day unite.

To the 9. Months before His Birth.



2d. Day to the years He lived at Nazareth; till He was 30 years of age.

3d. Day. To His ſolitude in the Deſert during 40. days.

4th. Day. To His prayer on the mountain.

5th. Day. To His prayer in the Garden of Olives.

6th. Day. To His ſolitude on the Croſs.

7th. Day. To the 40. days after His Reſurrection.

8th. Day. To His ſolitude in the bleſſed Sacrament of the Altar.

To pray well, it is not neceſsary that we pray without diſtractions; but that we poſseſs ſufficient reſolution continually to reject them; without being wearied or overcome with the ſtruggle. For in a ſtate of dereliction, deſolation & dryneſs of ſoul; we gather the choiceſt

fruits & expreſs the ſtrongeſt love of God, a love which He regards with the higheſt complacency.

The Popes, Innocent the XI. and Innocent the XII. Alſo Clement the XI. Granted a Plenary Indulgence to all Religious who should make this Retreat for 8 or 10 days, in view of renewing their fervour, & of obtaining eternal Life. Obſerve what your motive ought to be, in performing this retreat, & to which the Indulgence is annexed.

May the Father of all conſolation vouchſafe to give ſuch a bleſsing to this work, that it may redound to His greater glory, [& the ſalvation of the ſouls who have choſen God for their inheritance, by embracing a Religious ſtate.



THE PREPARATION.

A Twofold preparation is neceſſary for performing well this Retreat, a preparation of the ſpirit, & of the heart. The firſt conſiſts in the intention which is relative to the end you propoſe to yourſelf in making this ſpiritual retreat; that is, not only to ſpend theſe days in retirement & in ſeclusion from the reſt of the Community: but alſo to give up yourſelf entirely to the holy & Adorable will of God, who now calls upon you to ariſe from the dreadful ſtate of tepidity in which you have remain'd ſo long; & to renew your firſt fervour, that you may

obtain the virtues neceſſary to your calling & may learn to overcome your paſſions & remove every obſtacle to your advancement in the way of perfection. You will eaſily enter into theſe diſpoſitions, if you be ſenſible of the neceſſity of a retreat in order to acquire that diſpoſition of mind in which you would deſire to be found at the hour of your death.

2dly. A preparation of the heart is not leſs eſſential. This conſiſts in ſurrendering yourſelf entirely to God; by promiſing to correſpond faithfully with the graces He shall beſtow upon you, & ſaying with the R: Prophet. *Paratum cor meum Deus: paratum cor meum.* My heart is ready O God! my heart is ready. My heart has hitherto been inſenſible to Your holy inſpirations, henceforward it shall be obedient to whatever you require. Speak Lord for your ſervant liſtens to You with profound attention. This you muſt reſolve to do.



3dly. Encourage yourſelf to perform this retreat with joy & alacrity, & devote yourſelf entirely to God, ſeeking nothing elſe but Him; deſiring neither light nor comfort of ſoul, altho' the days of your retreat ſhould paſs away in darkneſs & deſolation.

4ly. Put away all worldly affairs, & all concern for that which does not regard the ſtate of your conſcience. To acquire this diſpoſition you ſhould ſo begin this retreat, as at the end you may be prepared to die; you muſt ſettle your affairs in ſuch a manner that nothing may be a hindrance to you. Did you really believe your life would end with this retreat, certainly in performing it, you would think of nothing but how to prepare yourſelf for a happy end. This thought would operate on your mind in the ſame manner, as the real approach of death.

5ly. When you have fixed the time of your retreat, with the

bleſſing of your Superior; implore fervently the aſſiſtance of the holy ſpirit; put yourſelf under the protection of the B^d. Virgin; your H. Founder, and other Saints. Be diffident in yourſelf, but place all your confidence in GOD. He who confides in himſelf will be forſaken. The ſoul is ſo far only filled with GOD; as she is diveſted of confidence in herſelf.

6^ly. Seek retirement as much as poſſible during this holy time: a retirement of the Body by refraining from all converſation, & a retirement of ſpirit by excluding all earthly thoughts & imploying your mind ſolely on the things of eternity. We read in Scripture that the H. Ghoſt viſibly decended from Heaven on JESUS CHRIST, in the ſolitude of the wilderneſs; & upon the Apoſtles in the ſolitude of their upper chamber; whence we are to learn that GOD imparts his moſt diſtinguished favours to the pious ſolitary.

7ly. Since the enemy of your ſoul will redouble his attacks to hinder the good fruit which uſually attends a ſpiritual retreat: he will not fail to exert his utmoſt efforts, that he may excite in you a diſguſt to ſilence & recollection; therefore be prepared againſt his temptations.

8ly. Be extremely careful not to omit any of your Conventual duties, & be equally punctual in obſerving the diſtribution of your time. Sooner or later you will taſte how ſweet our Lord is to a Soul, who Loves & ſerves Him with fidelity.

A PREPARATORY MEDITATION FOR THE DAY BEFORE YOUR RETREAT.

On the unhappy ſtate of a tepid Soul.

1ſt. PRELUDE. Place yourſelf in the preſence of GOD, & look on yourſelf as a poor creature ſeized

with a violent diſtemper, that needs ſome powerful ſpecific to effect your cure. And conſider that you can find none in this World, but what will augment your diſorder.

2d. PRELUDE. Implore the divine grace, that by his light you may diſcover the lamentable ſtate of your Soul: & ask of GOD to beſtow on you his powerful aſſiſtance for the amendment of your life.

I. POINT.

REflect what it is to be tepid & lukewarm in the ſervice of GOD. A tepid Religious is her who is not wholly good, nor wholly bad. She who on no account would commit a mortal ſin, but disregards venial ſins; she would willingly follow JESUS CHRIST, provided that it may be without denying herſelf. She would be obedient to the Divine will, but at the ſame time would follow her own inclination; not being willing,

ling, in what is agreable, to ſuſpect any crime. In à word, à tepid Religious is void of fervour, of piety, of watchfulneſs & all concern for the attainment of perfection. She does nothing but through conſtraint or cuſtom; is always negligent in the ſervice of God; diſtracted at Prayer & indolent in the uſe of the Sacraments. The ſoul of a lukewarm Religious is diſtempered without knowing it, & ſlights the helps which Religion offers for her cure. Examine yourſelf whether you be not ſuch a one; compare yourſelf with what you were, when you made your ſolemn Profeſſion, then you walked with ſimplicity & uprightneſs in the way of our Lord, & in His adorable preſence: then you had an extreme delicacy of conſcience for the moſt minute failings; then you performed every religious duty with relish & with fervour: but now where is the appearance of any ſolid virtue in you? Your Con-

feſſions are but a repetition of the ſame faults, with out any care to amend them. And under the pretext that others are more relaxed than yourſelf, you imagine you are ſufficiently regular; but with ſo little fidelity towards your GOD, can any one ſay with truth, that you are a good Religious?

II. POINT.

UNhappy wretch if I continue in this miſerable ſtate! What confuſion for me at the hour of my death, to ſee that I have lived ſo long in a holy inſtitute, cloathed with a holy Habit, profeſſed to a holy Rule, & yet ſo remote from true ſanctity; Alaſ! In how dangerous a ſtate is my poor ſoul! I find I am on the very brink of eternal ruin. And why do I not ſhudder at the ſight of danger? Doubtleſs this horrid calm within me, proceeds from ſuffering myſelf to by dazzled with the vanity of worldly objects, & from never

allowing myſelf leiſure to ponder eternal truths. O my ſoul! let theſe truths as well this day as ever after; become the ſubject of thy conſtant attention & Meditation. It is now time to amend thy ways, & live in the manner in which at death thou wilt wish to have lived.

III. POINT.

CONſider that a tepid & lukewarm ſoul is not far from hardneſs of heart, & being abandoned by her GOD. Hence the holy Fathers frequently make this alarming obſervation. Viz: that the converſion of the greateſt ſinner in the World, is far more eaſy to effect, than that of a tepid ſoul in Religion. Attend to the threat pronounced by GOD ag ainſt lukewarmneſs in the book of Revelations "becauſe thou art lukewarm, I will begin to caſt the out of my mouth." This terrible menace of the Almighty, is to eſtrange Himſelf forever from the ſoul. And we

know that Man never more takes into his mouth that, which he has once caſt out. My GOD! what a dreadful denunciation! O my ſoul doſt thou not tremble when thou heareſt this afflicting ſentence? It is now a long time GOD has graciouſly borne with, & expected thy amendment; wilt thou defer converſion till that dreadful moment, in which GOD may have decreed to abandon thee? O defer not to correſpond with the mercies of thy Lord who calls on thee, with ſo much tenderneſs. Has thou not learnt that a life of tepidity is followed by a death of damnation?

ASPIRATIONS.

MY GOD, my GOD! Have ſtill patience with me; do not banish me forever from your preſence. I beſeech you do not forſake me. I am ſorry from the bottom of my heart for my paſt negligence; I intreat Your Divine Majeſty to beſtow upon me the aſſiſtance of

Your all powerful grace, that I may from this very day begin to lead a better life: grant that from this time to my laſt moment Your Divine will may be ever accomplished in me. Grant that I may know what Your will is, & grant me grace faithfully to put it in execution.

1. Point. What is tepidity.

2. Point. The dangers of tepidity.

3. Point. A ſtrong Reſolution to avoid it.

Recommend yourſelf to the Bleſſed Virgin Mary, to your Holy Founder, & other Patrons. Beg them to obtain for you the graces neceſſary to deliver you from the dangerous ſtate of lukewarmneſs.

ANOTHER MEDITATION

FOR THE DAY BEFORE YOUR RETREAT, FOR THE AFTERNOON.

On the graces which you have received.

I. POINT.

CONſider how many graces you have received from GOD's infinite mercy, by which He has enlightened your underſtanding, & conſider alſo the heavenly inſpirations which He has ſent, & the ſilent reproaches with which He has touched your heart; the ſpiritual lectures & edifying examples, by the aid of all which He hath enabled you to walk in the path of perfection. Acknowledge that GOD hath often knocked at the door of your heart, inviting you to quit this ſtate of tepidity. You cannot but be ſenſible that this Father of mercies hath often ſecretly admoniſhed you, that the life you were leading was not that of a true Re-

ſigious. If on this day you were ſummoned before the awful tribunal of the great judge, to render a ſtrict account of all the graces you have received, & which you have ſo many years abuſed, ſince you entered Religion. What anſwer would you be able to give?

II. POINT.

CONſider theſe divine favours, almoſt infinite in number, beſides God alſo gives you the grace of performing this retreat of 8 days, which you are now about to begin. This grace you ſhould value the more highly as perhaps your eternal happineſs may depend on it. How many thouſands are there who never had the like favour granted them? And yet it is granted you through an effect of the divine mercy, after you have rendered yourſelf ſo little worthy of it. Make then ſtrong reſolutions of faithfully correſponding with ſo unmerited a favour.

III. POINT.

OBſerve that fidelity conſiſts in giving oneſelf wholy & entirely to God. Hence it follows, that in the time of this retreat you muſt only think on Him, on your own ſoul & on eternity: you muſt not as formerly content yourſelf with vain wishes & fruitleſs deſires of amendment; but on all occaſions you muſt put your hand to the work, & practice the good reſolutions which you have made. You will perform this retreat with joy & fidelity, if you conſider that this may be the laſt, that God deſigns to favour you with: & that the end of it may perhaps be that of your life. Conſider yourſelf as if you were at the point of death, & as if all things were ready, for your Burial If at this awful criſis God were to ſend an Angel to ſignify to you, that He would prolong your life for a few days: how would you exert yourſelf to ſpend

them well; only do now what you would then do, & begin this retreat, for once at leaſt; as if it were to be immediately followed by your death.

ASPIRATIONS.

MY GOD I caſt myſelf wholly into your arms, I give myſelf entirely to you & make a firm purpoſe of being faithful for the future to your holy inſpirations. I indeed can do nothing, but I beſeech you to afford me Your all powerful aid. For without it this retreat will avail me nothing; inſtead of profiting by it, I ſhall remain as tepid as negligent, in what regards my eternal Salvation as I was before. Grant then O GOD! I may during this holy time, & through the remainder of my life fulfill in all things Your holy will.

1. POINT. How have I cooperated with the graces received?

2. POINT. The great benefit, granted by GOD, of making this retreat.

3. POINT. To perform it with fidelity. It may be my laſt.

FIRST DAY

OF THE SPIRITUAL RETREAT.

I. MEDITATION.

On our laſt End.

I. POINT.

CONſider, the end for which GOD created you. Do you imagine that He hath placed you in this World to do your own will; & to follow in all things your natural inclination? You are placed in it according to the doctrine of Faith, only to fulfill the will of GOD, & to act ſolely for His glory. This is your duty; this leſſon JESUS CHRIST has taught us. Saying to us what He ſaid to *Martha*, that one thing is neceſſary; which is to adore, love & ſerve GOD. O how great, how noble is this end!

II. POINT.

CONsider, if your manner of life be conformable to this sublime end. Grieve for having so litte corresponded with the will of GOD, or having thought so seldom on it, & for perhaps not having once thanked Him for your Creation to so noble a destiny. Alas! what have I done since I entered Religion? I ought to have only loved GOD, & to have served Him with all the faculties of my soul. But far from loving & serving Him, I have continually offended Him. O GOD of infinite & sovereign Majesty; how have you borne with me so long? The excess of your great mercies, with which You expected me is to me a convincing proof that You desire not my ruin. I am heartily sorry for my sins, & now make a firm purpose faithfully to serve you through the rest of my days.

III. POINT.

CONsider, that GOD not only created you to serve Him in a common manner, like the rest of mankind, but that with peculiar goodness He has called you to serve Him in this Religious order. Now what is it to serve GOD in this holy state? Is it not to fulfill His holy will? That is to say to observe the Rules, Constitutions & other pious practises of this Order: whether it be in little or great matters; for all these observances are so many manifestations of the divine will. How have you complied with them? Humbly ask pardon, & make a firm purpose of amendment.

ASPIRATIONS.

I adore the will of the Almighty, & resign myself entirely to it. I shudder when I recollect my past life: for I have laboured for nothing less, than my last end. I draw nearer

nearer & nearer to that awful moment, yet have not hitherto advanced one ſtep towards my eternal happineſs.

1. POINT. How great & noble, is the end for which GOD created me;

2. POINT. When ſhall I correſpond with the mercies of GOD?

3. POINT. I will ſtrictly obſerve every duty.

II. MEDITATION.

On the means to attain to our laſt end.

I. POINT.

CONſider that GOD has not only created you to love & ſerve Him in this life; but alſo to be happy with Him forever in the next; & that He has beſtowed on you innumerable helps for your attainment of eternal happineſs. Call to mind the many favours both general & particular, corporal & ſpiritual, interior & exterior which you have received. In this thought

I am loſt, O my GOD! to conſider how much you have done & are ever doing for my ſalvation, & that I am only working for my own ruin! Should I be ſo unhappy as to be caſt into Hell. Alaſs! what would by my agony, at recollecting the numberleſs helps & graces granted to me for the enjoyment of eternal Bliſs!

II. POINT.

THE Sacraments, ſpiritual lectures, Prayers, Faſtings, Obedience, Mortification & other holy exerciſes of a Religious life, are all ſo many helps to the attainment of my laſt end. If I perform théſe things in the ſpirit with which I ought, I ſhall obtain eternal life. But have I performed them ſo? How have I obſerved the ſolemn vows, the Rule & Conſtitution of the Order? How have I prayed, how frequented the Sacraments? I confeſs O my GOD I ſincerely confeſs my faults; I have utterly

disregarded all these helps & thereby have rendered them unavailing. I have daily grown more slothful, negligent & tepid. O my GOD! I am sorry from the bottom of my heart; & make a firm resolution henceforward to be faithful to fulfill all my duties, & to be exact in the least observance of them.

III. POINT.

CONsider, that all creatures are so many helps to advance us towards our last end; & we should use them to assist us in praising & glorifying GOD. Remember all these with a silent yet intelligible voice, excite us to adore, love & praise His unspeakable goodness; & hence so many holy Religious have been inspired to raise their minds from earth to heavenly contemplation: if the whole Creation is only a help to my last end, certainly I ought not to place my affections on any portion of it, much less is it lawful for me to make any

creature my last end. On the contrary I ought to be particularly careful not to use them, but only as means to bring me to my GOD; that is to the service of GOD. The senses of my Body & powers of my Soul, are only given me for this purpose: & when I am tempted to imploy them otherwise, I must remember it was not for any other purpose, that GOD gave them to me; or that He has prolonged my life; but only that I might arrive at perfection. And if I do not this, in vain have I put on the habit of Religion.

ASPIRATIONS.

O my GOD! kindle in my frozen heart, an ardent desire of perfection which you require of me. O! pardon all my transgressions. I have used my Eyes, Ears, Tongue & Heart to estrange myself from thee, though I ought to have made use of them only as means to unite me to you. I will

henceforward apply to myſelf the words which You ſpoke to Your ſervant Abraham. "Walk in my preſence, & be perfect." Grant me then I beſeech you the help of Your grace.

1. POINT. The neglect of grace.

2. POINT. How have I performed my duties?

3. POINT. GOD is our laſt end, to whom alone I muſt devote myſelf.

III. MEDITATION.

Our obligation to uſe all the helps GOD has given us to conduct us to our End.

1. POINT.

CONſider, that GOD has given us his creatures, only that they may help us to obtain our laſt end. Therefore we ought to uſe them but ſo far as they are conducive to it; nor value one more than

another, except as far as it is more conducive to this end: & hence whether I am to do this or that office, be under this ſuperior or an other, all should be indifferent to me. It is ſufficient that I can by one or the other equally arrive at Heaven. Whether I have good or bad health, great or little learning, greater or leſs talents & accomplishments. I ought to be content, ſince I can equally love GOD, & ſave my ſoul. From this moment O my GOD! I place myſelf in your hands; I will have nothing more to do with this World, nor will I chooſe that which appears moſt agreable to me, however honorable it may be, but that only which will bring me moſt ſecurely to my laſt end. What is a hinderance to my ſalvation, that I will avoid however pleaſing; & will embrace with ardour, however repugnant to nature, whatever contributes to Your glory.

II. POINT.

EXamine whether you are too ſtrongly attached to any thing inconſiſtent with your religious Vows or with the ſtrict obſervance of your Rule. Reſolve to forſake it. Alas! my God how far have I wandered from the right way! Nor can I return into it without the ſpecial aid of thy grace. O tear from me with a ſtrong hand that friend or that object, however pleaſing, however dear; which I cannot enjoy or love, without offending Thee. And grant me the reſolution neceſſary to put it way; nor ever ſuffer that, what Thou haſt given me in thy goodneſs may withdraw me from Thy love. I will no more ſeek my eaſe my honour; or the eſteem of men. All theſe are vanity; acquaintance with the World, partiality for any of this Community, Worldly ſatisfactions; all theſe are obſtacles to my eternal happineſs.

III. POINT.

WHat will it avail you to have received in your life, much honour, performed great actions, & to have been placed in authority; if theſe have been the occaſions to you of damnation. At the death, of a Religious we do not ſay, She was happy becauſe she had been high in offices, been much admired: on the contrary, we ſay she is happy for having been a good Religious. And in truth that circumſtance is every thing, for without it nothing avails. I will however painful it be, labour from this time to become a perfect Religious. Whatever be the event I will make this my chief ſtudy, ſince it is the only means by which I may obtain eternal happineſs.

1. POINT. To ſeek in all things the greater glory of GOD.

2. POINT. To renounce whatever is a hinderance to perfection.

3. POINT. What will honour & pleaſure avail me, at the hour of my death.

I. MEDITATION.

FOR THE SECOND DAY.

On mortal Sin.

I. POINT.

Conſider, That the Angels were created to ſerve God, & that having ſinned by rebelling againſt Him; they were caſt into the bottomleſs pit, without the indulgence of either time or grace to do penance. They were the moſt exalted of creatures, the moſt beautiful production of the Almighty. They ſinned but once, & that but in thought; the thought of a moment. O my God! how great muſt Your hatred of ſin be, ſince You punished ſo ſeverely theſe Heavenly Spirits? Of how many ſins have I been guilty, in thought, word & deed? The very inſtant I fell into ſin, O my God! Your Juſtice might have ſnatched me out of life,

& might have condemned me to the flames of hell. I could have alledged no plea, since thus You treated the Angels those exalted Spirits, it was just that You should have less regard for me, for me who am nought but dust & slime of the earth. Yet after not only my first sin, but also many others committed through malice, You have still borne with me, & with unwearied patience have continued to wait for my repentance.

II. POINT.

ADam, who was also created to serve God, by falling into sin was with his whole posterity condemned to die, & to suffer all the miseries which we see in this World. Those bloody wars, those dreadful famines, those pestilential diseases, plagues &c: also the eternal loss of so many souls, are all the lamentable effects of one mortal sin. If there had been no mortal sin, God would have blessed us

with every good gift, as well in this life, as in the life to come. How great an evil is ſin, ſince it is the occaſion of ſo many punishments? With what horror muſt not Sin appear in the eyes of the Almighty, ſince notwithſtandig his mercy, which is infinite; notwithſtanding His goodneſs which is unlimited, & notwithſtanding the tender affection He bears to Man, created as He is to his own Image & likneſs. He inflicts on him ſuch terrible punishments, as well in time as in eternity; for one ſingle mortal ſin.

III. POINT.

O my God! I am confounded when I recollect what I ſuffer from the mere apprehenſion of the evil of War, or from the proſpect of a cruel famine. Alaſs how blind art thou my ſoul! All the evils & punishments of this World & of the next are not to be compared with ſin: this is the evil that should

draw tears from my eyes, & ſighs from my heart. Whence therefore is it, my heart & eyes remain unaffected; it is becauſe I have not a juſt conception of the horror of this evil. Excite in me O God! a juſt idea of it, that I may avoid it. I make a firm purpoſe rather to ſuffer any torment or evils of this World, than to commit one mortal ſin.

1. POINT. God who ſpared not the Angels, has had mercy on me.

2. POINT. How terrible is the grievouſneſs of ſin!

3. POINT. No evil ſo dreadful as ſin.

SECOND MEDITATION.

On venial Sin.

II. POINT.

VEnial ſin ſeems ſmall only to ſuch as have little faith & leſs love. Where theſe are not wanting, ſin appears more dreaful than all

other evils: becauſe by it our Redeemer, Father & Friend; is injured. The loſs of the whole World is a leſs evil; for by that Creatures indeed would be hurt; but by ſin GOD is outraged: for Man deprives Him of the honour & ſubmiſſion due to Him. my ſoul by ſin thou withdraweſt thyſelf from the merciful conduct of GOD, & sheweſt how little thou loveſt Him. Why do you commit ſin with ſo great facility & ſo little fear? O what ingratitude! Rather to offend GOD, than to mortify yourſelf by reſtraining a vain thought, an idle curioſity, a ſenſual deſire, motion of impatience &c. O GOD! of infinite goodneſs who doſt alone claim all my affections, prevent me with thy grace, that I may deteſt my paſt iniquities & never more offend thee.

II. POINT.

CONſider, The evils that venial ſins cauſe in the Soul. They di-

minish grace, cool fervour & render eaſy the way to mortal ſin. How many graces would God have graciouſly beſtowed upon you, had you not put a ſtop to His bounty by your daily ſins? The weakneſs you feel in reſiſting temptations & in bridling your paſſions; the disguſt which you experience at prayer, at Meditation, & all that tends to the ſervice of God: are all the evil effects of your venial ſins, & if you do not look well to yourſelf, be aſſured you will fall into mortal ſin. This truth the Holy Ghoſt hath taught, & daily experience confirms it. A Man becomes not wicked at once but by deegres. From being accuſtomed to venial we eaſily ceaſe to have an abhorrence of mortal ſins, thus we fall from one abyſs into an other.

III. POINT.

HOw many ſouls now in Hell acknowledge (alaſs too late!) that

their eternal ruin began from one venial ſin neglected which paved the way to mortal ſins. If you have a habit of any venial ſin however ſmall it may apear; which you never think of amending, be aſſured you will never riſe from the ſtate of tepidity, nor ever be able to advance one ſtep towards perfection. It is enough that a Bird be faſtened by a ſilken thread to prevent it from flying. Dread this unhappy ſtate. In order to know what ſin you are moſt inclined to, examine into what ſins you moſt frequently fall; perhaps you never ſufficiently conſider, nor conceive the evil of them from cuſtom having rendered them ſo familiar to you. Recommend yourſelf to God, make a purpoſe of avoiding all ſins, particularly thoſe to which you are moſt ſubject. Begin with that which ſeems to you the moſt difficult to overcome: impoſe ſome penance on yourſelf, as often as you commit it.

1. POINT. By ſin we injure GOD.

2. POINT. How prejudicial to the Soul is venial ſin?

3. POINT. Spare nothing to overcome habitual ſin.

THIRD MEDITATION,

On the Number of your Sins.

I. POINT.

REflect on the ſins both corporal & mental which you have commited, from your infancy to the preſent moment. Conſider how grievous they have been & how numerous. Hence conclude how unbecoming your life has been. Think well what you did when you fell into ſin. You injured GOD Himſelf, I ſay not all, you offended that GOD who is infinite beauty, the Almighty Sovereign & Creator of all. His ineffable Glory was thereby dishonored: who hath done Him this injury? It is

you yourſelf, you who are but duſt & ashes, a mere nothing: is it poſſible that ſuch a deſpicable worm of the Earth, should have riſen ſo boldly againſt the infinite Majeſty of the God head? In the preſence of Heaven & Earth I will confeſs my iniquity; who will give tears to my eyes, that I may day & night bewail the enormity of my offences? Who will give me that ſorrow that grief & compunction, by which I may make condign ſatisfaction: I will offer to the Eternal Father, the bitter pains which Jesus Christ endured for my ſins. I will beſeech Him to ſoften & melt my heart, that my contrition may be ſincere.

II. POINT

Conſider, That ſin through its malice is ſo baſe & deſpicable, that altho you had commited only one in your life, yet you ought for that one continulally to hum-

ble yourſelf. It is true you have confeſſed it & have felt hearty contrition for it. Yet this does not take away the ſhame of having committed it. It is always true that you have been a ſinner & undeſerving of any good, that you have merited all manner of punishment & ill treatment; It is always true that you have been guilty of outraging the Divine Majeſty, hence it follows that you never can with Juſtice complain of any affliction, or adverſity that may befall you.

III. POINT.

BEg of God to beſtow on you an humble and Contrite heart. And ſince you have ſinned, make your very fall a new motive of humbling yourſelf more & more, on every occaſion. Remember that for the Love of God you choſe to be an abject in this Convent; that you might by humbling yourſelf make atonement for your ſins. Now therefore reſolve more firm-

ly than ever to do this, & desire to be despised & trodden under foot, I am happy O God to find that You have not rejected me, after having commited so many crimes against your Divine & Adorable Majesty.

1. Point, A deep sense of sorrow, the effect of love.

2. Point. How contemptible have my sins rendered me.

3. Point. To humble myself at the view of my sins.

FIRST MEDITATION,

For the third day, on the necessity of preparing for Death.

I. POINT.

Consider, that Death is the passage by which the Soul must go from time to Eternity. But to what Eternity? All we Know, is, that we shall be eternally happy if we die well; & eternally miserable if

we die ill. It is therefore highly important that we die well; & the way to obtain that happineſs, is continually to prepare for Death. Was it not for that end I firſt entered Religion? Whence comes it then, that I have ſo little thought of it, as if I imagined that to die well, it were ſufficient to put on the Habit of Religion. Thinkeſt thou my Soul that all Religious die well? In every ſtate men die ſuch as they lived. If in Religion they live a ſlothful & disorderly life, they commonly die in that ſtate. How neceſſary is it then, that I excite myſelf to new fervour, ſince the danger of an unhappy death if I do not is ſo imminent.

II. POINT.

TO die a Holy, death is to die after having ſatisfied for ſin. After having practiced Virtue, after having been truly contrite for your faults, & after a ſincere conver-

ſion to GOD with your whole heart. Defer not a moment. Are you in his happy ſtate, if you were to die this very inſtant? Alas! were it ſo, I ſhould cry to GOD from the bottom of my heart, I ſhould petition for more time. But why: why not do now that which I ſhall then wish for time to perform? Why not now, prepare for death by a ſtrict obſervance of every duty? Since perhaps I am nearer death than I think? You admoniſh me, my Lord to watch without ceaſing, & yet I am ſlothful. Open my eyes O GOD! Enlighten me with Your heavenly light, & make me comprehend all the importance of this point on which depends my eternal happineſs: excite my will by your grace to perform all that is neceſſary.

III. POINT.

CONſider, that we can die but once; if unprepared, the evil can

not be remedied; no excuſe is then admiſſible the evil is irreparable. Perhaps you ſought to diſcharge with honour the Offices you held; but did you labour to glorify GOD in them, & to ſanctify your Soul. This only could make them a preparation for death? You know not at what time you ſhall die; you know not whether it will be in the day or night, winter or ſummer unexpectedly, or by illneſs. Live then every day as if that were your laſt. Remember that to reform your conduct & reſiſt your paſſions, time is neceſſary: neglect not the preſent. Many have deſigned a future amendment, who have been ſurprized by death. No one intends to die in the ſtate of tepidity; but if we ſet not our hand to the work while time is given us, we ſhall experience the fate of thouſands; who deſigned to mend their lives; but died without amending them.

1. POINT. I muſt by new fervour, prepare for death.

2. POINT. What it is to prepare for death.

3. POINT. Why not to day, leſt you be too late?

SECOND MEDITATION.

On the ſentiments we ſhall have at the hour of death.

I. POINT.

REpreſent to yourſelf a Religious upon her death bed; who calls to mind the Solemn Vows she has made, & at the ſame time how remiſs she has been in the obſervance of them, & of monaſtic diſcipline. The Phyſicians tell her, there is no hopes of life, & that she muſt prepare herſelf for death. Alas! with what a mortal grief is she pierced, how is she torn by remorſe of conſcience? She ſees in one inſtant all the diſorders of

her paſt life, & the dreadful account she muſt shortly render at the judgment Seat of the Almighty. Overwhelmed with terror & confuſion, diſordered in all the powers of her Soul, she caſts her eyes on every ſide. What awails it now, to have given a looſe to her inclinations; & followed the bent of her vain deſires? O that she could begin a new life! O that she could but live a few years more; or at leaſt a month or two longer! She now acknowledges her transgreſſion, but it is to be feared, it is too late. She should have done it before.

II. POINT.

A Religious who hath lived in the ſtrict obſervance of her vows & in a perfect punctual performance of her Rule & conſtitutions, when death approaches, what a comfort does she not feel? Wholly reſigned to the will of Heaven, confident in the Divine Goodneſs

she

she rejoices to hear that the end of her trial & banishment is approaching, & that she is about to enjoy that eternal happineſs which God has prepared for his faithful ſervants. There is nothing which she is pained to leave, becauſe she is attached to nothing. She is full of joy, like one who has run the race & gained the prize. She regrets not the honours, the pleaſures, & conveniences of which she deprived herſelf for the love of God; but beholds with delight the temptations she has overcome, the difficulties she has ſurmounted with a view to the discharge of her duty; while she is aſſured that the meaſure of her reward will be that of her labours.

III. POINT.

Conſider, what will be your ſentiments in that hour; whether you will not have much to reproach yourſelf with. How melancholy will it not be, to find you have

not done what you could & ought to have done? O my God! how terrible will it than be to call to mind, ſo many years ſpent in Religion with no other effect than that of foſtering our pride & ſelf love, & of prefering our intereſt & eaſe, to our duty; & at the hour of our death to ſhew nothing of a Religious, but the habit. Such cannot expect that God, whom they have ſo ill ſerved, will then beſtow on them extraordinary favours; or that their holy Founder, whoſe Rule they have ſo little obſerved, will regard them as his Children in their laſt moments. Thus deſtitute of ſuch ſuccours as the good enjoy, they will wish to have been more ſtrictly obſervant of Religious diſcipline, & to have been more humble & devout. For in that hour their paſt irregularities, their ſelf indulgence & the gratification of their appetites, will yield them no ſatisfaction but on the contrary deep remorſe;

They will then find no comfort but in what they have done & ſuffered for JESUS CHRIST, with ſimplicity of ſpirit & purity of heart. Reſolve to amend your life, beg grace & pardon.

1. POINT. The wiſhes of an imperfect Religious at death.

2. POINT. The comfort of a good Religious in her laſt hour.

3. POINT. At death what will be your ſentiments?

THIRD MEDITATION,

On Death.

I. POINT.

CONſider, that death is a final ſeparation of the Soul from the body, from the World & from all creatures; to enter into a land where all that is ſo much valued here, will be made no account of. Thus will the World end to me, & be as if it had never been. In

that moment every thing in regard of me will be no more: all will vanish like a shadow, Learning, honour, eaſe, friendship, amuſements, & all the objects of my former delight; all will appear to me as a dream, a shadow, & deceit. Soon will this awful moment be mine, by an infallible decree of the Divine Juſtice. Yes ſoon ſhall that day come when at morning I ſhall be of the number of the living; & at evening among the Dead. They will lay me upon a Bier, carry me to the Church, put me in a grave caſting earth on my body, & thus place me in a ſtate where I ſhall be no more thought of than if I never had been. There will remain nothing for me but a Coffin & a ſtinking carcaſs to be the prey of worms.

II. POINT.

This will be the end of that body which you have ſo fondly loved; which you have made the

object of all your attention, which you have pampered with so much care, which you have indulged by removing from it every inconvenience, & by gratifying its appetites. But now it must quit whatever it coveted in this World, without being able to carry away with it any of these things; but the guilt of having loved them too much. If this be so, as certainly it is; why do you set you heart on any thing in this World; Examine what is that to which you are most attached, & look upon it now with the eyes of a dying Man. Despise it as a mere vanity, unworthy of your affection. O Lord my GOD! grant me your assistance, that I may put away from a motive of virtue & meritoriously, all that which by force & necessity I must forsake at the hour of death. Help me to live in the continual exercice of every virtue; & withdraw me from every tie to creatures as perfectly as if I were already dead.

III. POINT.

AT death there will be no more time for you of all the good resolutions you have made & not performed; you will not be able to accomplish so much as one. All the virtues you now practice, & good works you perform are yours for eternity. If you have done none; it is now too late. It will never more be in your power to make one act of contrition, love, faith &c: or to have the benefit of the Sacraments, gain Indulgences; or perform an act of chrity &c: for the time of mercy will then be past for you. Now while you have yet time endeavour to serve GOD well, & to reach the perfection of your state as you are bound to do. If you do it not, you will feel a cruel remorse of conscience at the point of death; when you see you have led so unprofitable a life; & are no longer able to perform any good, when eter-

nity is at hand & you know not what wil be your lot.

1. Point. What death is?

2. Point. Leave all things at preſent by a ſpiritual death.

3. Point. Labour now; at death it will be too late.

FIRST MEDITATION.

For the Fourth day.

On the particular judgment.

I. POINT.

Conſider, that the very moment you die, your Soul will be preſented before the awful tribunal of Jesus Christ. A judge ſo much the more to be feared as He is infinitely Juſt & powerful, from whoſe ſentence there will be no appeal. There you muſt give a ſtrict account how you have correſponded with the many holy inſpirations, & powerful graces you have received for your ad-

vancement in the way of perfection. You must give an account of your many Confessions, Communions & hours of prayer &c. What will you be able to answer to this Sovereign judge? Detest your great ingratitude in regard of GOD, who is so good, so loving & so liberal; adore his infinite mercy, & acknowledge you have merited all the rigors of His offended justice. Cast your weeping eyes upon JESUS CHRIST hanging on the Cross for you: behold His arms stretched out, His gaping wounds, His head bowing downwards to encourage you to place your confidence in Him. He is your Father, & one tear of repentance issuing from a contrite heart, may appease His wrath; He is now easily moved to mercy, but in the day of judgment, He will be inexorable.

II. POINT.

CONsider, that you must also render an account to the Divine

Juſtice of all your evil words, thoughts, works & of thoſe you occaſioned in others. It will not excuſe you to ſay, I ſaw others do the ſame. Their example will be no plea for you, becauſe your Rule & conſtitutions are what you ought to have followed. By them a Religious will be judged; by them she will ſtand or fall. But with what fear & dread, will you be ſeized when you reflect how often you have transgreſſed them; that every ſlight temptation or occaſion was to you the cauſe of failing in a ſtrict obſervance of thoſe duties, to which you had promiſed God you would be faithful. O! then you will form quite another judgment of the obligation which you incurred, to obſerve the Rule & conſtitutions.

III. POINT.

PErhaps you imagine that only great & enormous ſins will be ſubjected to that judgment? But the Holy Goſpel aſſures us, that

we must render an account of every Idle word. A glance of the Eye, a secret thought, all will be strictly judged. Then will be narrowly examined not only our evil, but also our virtuous actions. The Sacraments you frequented; the Divine Office you recited; your fasts &c. will be all strictly inquired into; & which of these your works, has the qualities necessary to render them perfect? Prevent the severity of this strict scrutiny, by calling yourself now to an account, & by judging yourself now with greater severity than you have been used to do. Watch with more vigilance over your whole comportment, & often excite yourself to acts of contrition. Cast yourself before the Image of your Crucified Saviour; beseech him to forgive your sins before he comes to examine you with severity at your particular judgment.

Thou just judge of vengeance due!
Pardon of my sins renew:
E're the accounting day ensue.

1. POINT. We must render an account of the use, of what we have received.

2. POINT. A Religious will be judged by her Rule.

3 POINT. We shall be examined, not only as to our bad, but also as to our good works, that have been ill performed.

SECOND MEDITATION

Of the general Judgment.

I. POINT.

Consider, That, at the last day all Men will be assembled together in the Valley of Josaphat GOD in the sight of all nations, will make to appear His past goodness & mercy, on the one hand, & our ingratitude on the other. In that dreadful day all things will be made known; our thoughts & most hidden desires; works which have been done in the greatest

ſecreſy shall all be brought to light, while every one will read in our conſcience the whole hiſtory of our ſins, without the poſſibility of concealing them from the whole World. They will be diſcloſed to the ſight of Men & Angels. Even the Heavens will witneſs them. What confuſion! If the fear of our ſmalleſt imperfections being known to our fellow creatures is now ſufficient to reſtrain us from indulging of our paſſions; with what Kind of fear shall we be impreſſed when we know that our moſt hidden thoughts will be made known to the whole World.

II. POINT.

CONſider, what will then be to you the ſubject of the greateſt confuſion; pride, ambition & hypocriſy; not leſs then, than now will be accounted moſt hateful crimes. If you wish not to bear on that day a load of infinite guilt with infinite confuſion; lament now

now your faults with tears of true contrition. Make a firm reſolution not to atter any word, conſent to any thought or perform any action of which you will in that hour have cauſe to repent. Imitate the life of JESUS CHRIST, & of his Saints. O how happy if you live the life of a good Religious? & how miſerable if in Religion you be cold & tepid! No excuſe will be of ſervice to you. Why ſo? Becauſe it will be ſaid. Could you not have done, what ſo many others have done.

III. POINT.

CONſider, that in this general aſſembly the Elect will be placed on the right hand of the Sovereign Judge, & the reprobate on the left. O my GOD! on which ſide ſhall I be placed? If now I lead a holy life; as ſo many choſen Souls have done; I ſhall at the day of judgment be on the right ſide; but ſhould. I be ſo mi-

ſerable as to have my lot amongſt the reprobate, how inconceivable will be my anguish when I may perhaps ſee many who have lived in the world at the right hand of JESUS CHRIST, and myſelf though a Religious, on the left. In short the Souvereign Judge will pronounce the final Sentence Saying, come ye Elect, ye Bleſſed of my Father, poſſeſs the kingdom prepared for you. Depart from me will he ſay to the wicked, into everlaſting fire.

Weigh well and reflect upon theſe two ſentences. At that inſtant the heavens will be opened, and the Elect will enter into the glory of the Celeſtial Jeruſalem ſinging Hymns of praiſe to the Almighty; and rejoicing for the labours, humiliations, and conflicts they have undergone. At the ſame time, the Gulph of Hell will open, and the Damned will be caſt into it with Frightful shrieks and lamentable howlings, execrating a

thouſand times the falſe pleaſures which have brought them thither. Thus they will be ſeparated from the good for ever and ever. Which will be your lot, the choice depends upon you? Labour with great ardour, and make now ſuitable reſolutions &c:

1. Point. What will be the confuſion of our crimes?

2. Point. To refrain now from every evil.

3. Point. O Dreadful Day to the tepid Religious.

III. MEDITATION.

For the fourth Day.

On Hell.

I. POINT.

Conſider, that Hell is a gulph profound, full of fire, darkneſs, and every kind of torment. There are caſt all ſuch Souls; as have been Idolaters of their own will

which they had refuſed. to ſubject to GOD. There all the ſenſes of the Body, and powers of the Soul will endure inexpreſſible torments, without the leaſt mixture of any good. You ſometimes think it hard to ſuffer the Poverty, Obedience; and auſterity of a Religious life. But what is the ſtricteſt poverty, when compared to that of being deprived of every thing, but burning fire, even of a drop of water? What is the moſt perfect Obedience, to the being bound hand and foot in fiery chains? Or can the ſharpeſt penance, inflict a pain equal to the torments there endured?

II. POINT.

BUt the moſt dreadful is, never to behold the moſt adorable face of GOD: and at the ſame time to be ſenſible we were created only for Him, from whom we ſhall be ſeparated for all Eternity. In every moment we ſhall ſuffer all

the torments of an Eternity. An always, and a never will be the only matter of reflection in that woeful ſtate. Always unhappy, never happy. Prevent this miſery by overcoming your Paſſions, by not yielding to humour, or gratifying your Sloth, by not ſleeping when you ought to be praiſing GOD, by not indulging appetite in oppoſition to faſts of obligation. By fidelity in each Duty you walk ſecurely: but if you become indolent, you are in danger of falling a prey to thoſe ſcorching flames. O my GOD! who haſt created me for thyſelf, can it be that I ſhall never behold Thee? O Eternity ſhalt thou never know an end? Fleeting pleaſures! how ſhort has been your duration? Torments ever laſting! how long will you endure?

III. POINT.

IF you are loſt, what grief will you ſuffer when you ſee the right you once had to Heaven; and the

many helps you had received to obtain it? Heaven was promiſed you at baptism, opened to you at your Profeſſion, ſince you were then admitted into the path that leads ſtrait to heaven. If you had never left that path, your confidence might juſtly be great: but now at leaſt return; and as you receive a pledge of Eternal Bliſs in the adorable Sacrament of the Altar, be confident that amidſt ſo many helps, your Soul will not be loſt. Give yourſelf to humble obedience, to exact fidelity in the obſervance of your Rule; with a condeſcending Charity, to all your Religious ſiſters; give yourſelf to the practice of devout prayer. It is the want of theſe that draws that reproach from your conſcience; what has it availed you, to have forſaken the world? Strengthen, me O Lord, to make the neceſſary change in my conduct, through the merits of Your Blood, ſhed to Redeem me from eternal flames.

I. POINT. How much leſs is the pain of performing our duties, than that which will be the punishment of neglecting them?

II. POINT. By indulging our irregular deſires, we ſeparate ourſelves from GOD for Ever.

III. POINT. We ſhall be loſt if we do not make good uſe of the benefits we receive. What ſhall I do for the future?

I. MEDITATION.

FOR THE FIFTH DAY.

On the Imitation of JESUS CHRIST.

I. POINT.

GOD became Man to teach us the way to heaven, by his Doctrine and Example: *Ego ſum via*, a ſure. A ſtrait, a ſecure way! You cannot better ſecure your ſalvation that by walking in his footſteps. Out of this path there is no ſalvation. JESUS CHRIST is the pattern

of all the Elect. O JESUS my Saviour, my Master, my GOD! what reason have I not to be confounded when I compare my past life with yours? I ought to be meek and humble of heart like you, poor and dead to the world like you, patient like you, &c. But I am impatient, vain, proud, enamoured of my own will, and of the dangerous pleaures of this world. I believe your Doctrine, but I follow not your example. My belief then will only serve to encrease my punishment, and to justify my eternal reprobation. I will then imitate you in all my works and entirely regulate my whole life according to yours. Live JESUS, in my spirit, in my heart, and in my whole conduct.

II. POINT.

CONsider, that Religious perfection, to which you are obliged to aspire; consists in loving GOD with your whole heart and with

all the powers and faculties of your Soul. But how can you think you love him in this manner if you do not ſtrive to imitate him? Be aſſured this imitation is abſolutely neceſſary, and apply to yourſelf that which heretofore was ſaid to Moses: *Inſpice & fac ſecundum exemplar*, Look Religious Soul on my Son, as your Model, and ſee that you be yourſelf a true copy of him. Make firm purpoſes, that in all you will ſeek to reſemble him; that by this means you may procure him more honour, and afford him ſtronger proofs of your love.

III. POINT.

When you are occupied in what regards the Divine Service, have always Jesus Christ before your Eyes, and conſider with what reſpect, ardour, and attention he conducted himſelf in all thoſe works which tended to the honour of his heavenly Father.

Conſider alſo with what modeſty, with what ſweetneſs, and with what mildneſs he converſed with Men. How all he performed was exalted by ſupernatural motives; even his natural actions of Eating, ſleeping &c. Thus you ought by a pure intention to glorify GOD in all you do. Beg of Him to give you His grace, that you may never loſe ſight of the example he has given you. Take him in all things for your model and endeavour to conform your life in all things to that of your Divine Maſter.

I. POINT. To walk in the humble foot ſteps of JESUS CHRIST.

II. POINT. Your perfection conſiſts in loving GOD.

III. POINT. In all your actions endeavour to imitate JESUS CHRIST.

II. MEDITATION.

FOR THE FIFTH DAY.

The Word was made Flesh.

I. POINT.

TO ſatisfy the Divine juſtice for the ſin of Adam; there was but one means poſſible, That GOD himſelf ſhould become Man. For all that Angels and Man could do, being only of a finite value, would have been no adequate ſatisfaction for one ſin; becauſe by that ſin the infinite Majeſty of GOD had been injured. Who could have conceived that GOD loved Man ſo much as to become his Redeemer. Man not having merited it, and GOD being no ways obliged to it. He would have been equally great and glorious, though all men had been loſt. *Quid eſt homo?* What is man? What am I? that, to make me happy, you have thus de-

baſed yourſelf? And what returns ſhall I make to your love? All that is hard, irkſome, and difficult in my Duties, I will embrace, and will endeavour to perform the beſt I am able, to procure your glory.

II. POINT.

CONſider the circumſtances of the Birth of JESUS CHRIST, and enter in ſpirit the little Cottage of Nazareth. You will find nothing there but extreme poverty. The Arch-Angel Gabriel, one of the higheſt Spirits who ſtands before the Throne of the Adorable Trinity, humbles himſelfs at the feet of Mary. And she who was choſen to be the Mother of GOD, and therefore Queen of heaven and earth, takes upon her the lowly title of a poor Handmaid, and the Eternal Word, the only ſon of GOD, condeſcends to take the nature of a ſlave, and humbles himſelf to the loweſt degree, in the moſt perfect manner, before his Eternal

Eternal Father. Will you imitate them? And when humbled or accuſed though falſely, make no defence to ſpare your own confuſion, nor never deviate from the ſtricteſt truth.

III. POINT.

Conſider theſe illuſtrious perſonages, ſo much the more completely humbled as they were exalted in dignity. Learn from this, that the greater favours God has beſtowed upon you, ſo much the more ought you to abaſe and humble yourſelf, for by humility you ſhew your gratitude and acknowledge his benefits. Humble yourſelf and in order to practice this virtue, labour to acquire the ſentiments of that true humility, which Jesus Christ exerciſed when he firſt became Man, when he ſtooped ſo low, and by that ſignal humiliation, ſo glorious to God, began to repare the injury which the pride of Man had cauſed to the

Divine Majeſty. Offer to the Eternal Father the humility of JESUS CHRIST, influenced by the ſame virtue make a new reſolution to root out of your heart all pride. Say to yourſelf, the Son of GOD has humbled and abaſed Himſelf: ſhall then ſo vile and baſe a Worm as I deſire praiſe and preferment? Beg of GOD the gift of true humility.

I. POINT. Labour to promote the honour of GOD who has done ſo much for you.

II. POINT. Humble yourſelf on every occaſion.

III. POINT. The greater you are, more humble yourſelf the.

THE III. MEDITATION.

FOR THE FIFTH DAY.

On the Birth of JESUS CHRIST.

I. POINT.

CONſider JESUS CHRIST lying in the Crib, and ſee to what lowlineſs and miſery he is reduced through his love of you. He is the Sovereign Lord of the whole World, who with a bountiful hand fills all Creatures with benedictions, yet he choſe for himſelf the moſt ſevere poverty, and would be born in the greateſt indigence. Nor would he receive his birth at Nazareth, where he might have enjoyed thoſe ſmall conveniences which are not wanting to the pooreſt people: but deſirous of appearing with uncommon and extraordinary poverty, he voluntarily choſe for the place of his Birth an old forlorn ſtall for Beaſts, which was open

on every ſide, and that, in the midſt of Winter, where he had nothing but a little ſtraw in the Crib and no other warmth, but what he received from the breath of the beaſts.

II. POINT.

VIſit In ſpirit this forlorn and forſaken ſtall, far from finding there any ſuperfluities, you will diſcover a total want of all neceſſaries. Call to mind the ſolemn Vow of poverty you made, and in order to obſerve it, beg JESUS CHRIST to give you its true ſpirit. Are you not now far from it, if after ſo many years ſpent in religion, you ſtill complain of inconveniences? O let the Example of JESUS excite you to accept of every deprivation for his love, and to banish from your heart all uneaſineſs at thoſe deprivations, for it is a folly to Profeſs Poverty while you dread the ſufferance of the ſmalleſt want. We ſhould eſteem it a

melancholy ſymptom in a Religions who ſeeks after thoſe vanities and conveniences which people in the world can ſcarce procure with great labour and induſtry. Contemplate the Divine Infant of Bethlem, deſtitute of all things, and learn to deſpiſe Riches, honours &c: and willingly to bear the hardships of Holy Poverty.

III. POINT.

JESUS is so great a lover of the Angelical virtue of Chaſtity, that, though he ſubjected himſelf to all miſeries and ſuffering of human life, yet would not remain nine months in the Womb of a Mother leſs pure, than the Bleſſed Virgin, of a virgin whoſe purity is compared to that of the Heavenly ſpirits. How pleaſing will you render yourſelf in his Eye, if you ſtrictly obſerve the vow of Chaſtity, which you have made! Examine here in what you are deficient. For this Virtae is a Lil-

ly, which only blooms amidſt thorns. If you deſire always to preſerve it, make a firm reſolution not to be ſo much concerned for your body, nor to be too ſolicitous about your health, alſo to keep a ſtrict guard over your ſenſes. Make a firm purpoſe to diſengage yourſelf from all particular friendships how lawful ſoever they may appear, for though innocent, they may become ſenſual. Implore for this end the interceſſion and ſuccour of the moſt holy and moſt powerful Queen of Virgins.

I. Point. The extreme poverty of our ſaviour at his Birth.

II. Point. To reject all deſire of convenience.

III. Point. A ſmall defect in the Virtue of purity is dangerous.

FIRST MEDITATION.

FOR THE SIXTH DAY.

On the private Life of JESUS CHRIST.

I. POINT.

CONſider that JESUS CHRIST being deſcended from Heaven upon Earth, to labour for the converſion of Men; lived notwithſtanding in the ſhop of a poor tradesman for 30 years, a private and obſcure life. But why ſo long, when he could have appeared to Men, and made known, his wonderful Talents? O how high are theſe myſteries. It ſeemed as if JESUS CHRIST did nothing remarkable during his private life, yet never did He ceaſe from doing that which was moſt glorious to GOD, and moſt profitable to Man. He honoured his Eternal Father by doing his Divine Will; and inſtructed Man by his own Exam-

ple; showing that perfection consists in doing every action well, however inconsiderable it may appear.

II. POINT.

SEEK not to perform great things, to acquire the esteem of Men. Though slighted and contemned as wanting incapacity, do not on this account undertake any thing but what GOD requires, and obedience ordains. Examine if you do not often fail in fulfilling the Divine Will, either through human respects, which you should contemn; or through a shameful Sloth, which you ought to overcome? Be convinced that Divine love consists not in the repetition of idle and unprofitable words, but in the accomplishment of the Divine Will. To perform this it is necessary you should ever keep command of your attention. If you put your trust in GOD, though you are weak, he can by his

grace ſtrengthen you. JESUS, ſays the Evangeliſt grew in virtue, as he advanced in years. But alas! is it ſo with you? Where is now your firſt fervour, which you ought to have been increaſing? O my GOD! give me grace, and I will begin afresh, as if I did but now enter the Noviceship; and I will dedicate myſelf wholly to the exerciſe of every virtue.

III. POINT.

CONſider that the moſt diſtinguished virtue which JESUS practiced for 30 years, was his Obedience to the Bleſſed virgin, and to St. JOSEPH. The Evangeliſt includes in theſe few words, *Et erat ſubditus illis*, and he was Obedient to them, on entire panegyric on the life of JESUS. At your ſolemn Profeſſion, you promiſed Obedience: but how have you obeyed? Was it with the utmoſt diligence and attentien? With an entire ſubjection of your mind and heart?

How often have you obeyed through a motive of neceſſity or from other human Views? How short do you fall of the Obedience of your Divine Maſter? Remember when you diſobey, that you then withdraw from the Altar the Sacrifice you there offered. Renew again this oblation of yourſelf; make a firm purpoſe henceforth to be truly and ſincerely Obedient in every occaſion, as well in little, as in great. See and acknowledge GOD's will in that of your Superior.

1. POINT. Great Virtue conſiſts in doing every action with attention.

2. POINT. To repair the paſt by more ardent endeavours.

3. POINT. Let your Obedience be ſuch, as to fulfil the Sacrifice you have made?

THE II. MEDITION

FOR THE SIXTH DAY.

On the Converſion of St. MARY MAGDALEN.

I. POINT.

CONſider, that MAGDALEN was a Woman of a ſcandalous Life, and wholly abſorbed in the vanities of the world. But as ſoon as ſhe liſtened to Divine grace, ſhe bewailed the unhappy ſtate of her Soul; and haſtened to caſt herſelf at the feet of JESUS. No Creature, no attachment, nor paſſion was able to withhold her. With how many graces hath not GOD even till now favoured you? Have you correſponded, with them as readily as did this public Sinner. Beg pardon of GOD for your tepidity, ſloth, and ingratitude. Weep at the feet of JESUS in company with this happy Penitent. Let not human reſ-

pects be any obſtacle to your riſing from a ſtate of tepidity and becoming fervent, or to the amendment of any fault, or the interruption of any particular friendship which you find to be inconſiſtent with perfection.

II. POINT.

ENcourage yourſelf by her example, and be perſuaded that unleſs you become ſuperior to all human reſpect, you will never he able to advance one ſtep in the way of perfection. Let them ſay what they pleaſe upon the change of your conduct. Let them attribute it to melancholy, lowneſs of Spirits, or to diſappointment: let them even ſuppoſe it to proceed from a momentary paroxysm of devotion; be firm and undismayed. God wil not fail to ſupport this new reformation of your life. He will take your cauſe in hand as he did that of Magdalen. Let them O my Lord, think whatever they,

they will, my endeavour shall be to ſerve you, and ſeek ſolely to pleaſe you, and for your love I will contemn all the cenſures of Men.

III. POINT.

CONſider that Magdalen ſacrificed every thing to GOD; her pomp, her Vanity, her lovers, her pleaſures. Every thing but GOD, appeared to her at once as a mere nothing: and GOD alone at the ſame inſtant, appeared to be her all. She offers herſelf wholly to JESUS CHRIST, and conſecrates to his ſervice, all she formerly, made uſe of as inſtruments to ſin; her Eyes, to weep, and continually bewail her paſt ſinful life: her Hair ſerves to wipe the feet of her ſaviour: her mind is only intent upon Him: and her heart burns with a pure and ardent love. Her ſacrifice was perfect; for she gave herſelf wholly to GOD without reſerve. Take this Penitent for your

Model. Conſider what has been to you the occaſion of offending GOD; and you will find all your ſenſes, all the powers of your ſoul to have been the inſtruments of your ſins. Make a firm purpoſe that for the future you will uſe them only to GOD's glory. Render your Sacrifice compleat, like that of Magdalen. No longer ſeek the eſteem of Men, or your own ſatisfaction. It is impoſſible for you to arrive at perfection, if you remain a ſlave to your paſſions.

I. POINT. Let not ſloth detain you from ſeeking JESUS.

II. POINT. You muſt overcome human reſpects if you would find Him.

III. POINT. Is there any thing you can refuſe to Sacrifice for His love.



THE III. MEDITATION

FOR THE SIXTH DAY.

On Fidelity.

I. POINT.

TO what end has God ſpared your life and given you time and means to enter this retreat; was it not to conſider and bewail you ſins? To take ſuch reſolutions as are neceſſary to do them a way, and to prevent you from withdrawing ungenerouſly that heart from God, which you offerd, through Love of Him on the Altar at your Profeſſion! Caſt your Eyes on Him whom you then vowed to ſerve with the utmoſt fidelity. Where is now that love that exact obſervance, from which you ought never to have departed? O endeavour now at leaſt to give Him ſome proofs of it, by beginning with new fervour to diſcharge each du-

ty with that fidelity, which He has a right to exact, and you are obliged to perform.

II. POINT.

A Religious Soul, that does not labour to serve God, must be an object of displeasure in his sight. Does she not merit the punishment of the Servant, who buried the Talent which his Master gave him? For does not she act as unfaithfully, who misspends the hours given her for prayer; nor employs, as she ought, the Abilities she has received to glorify God with all the powers of her Soul; her Senses, &c. These are talents which she has not only buried, but employed to the displeasure of her Divine Master. Of these an account will be exacted. Now therefore is the time to resolve to labour, and to double each Talent, that in the last hour you may hear those consoling words. Well done good and faithful Servant, &c.

III. POINT.

GOD who has bestowed on you the grace of a Religious Vocation, a favour granted to few, will enquire how faithfully you have observed the Vows made at the foot of the Altar. Have you never sought for recreation at the expence of Regularity? Has sloth never prevailed so far, as to prevent your compliance with duty? Or have you not indulged your appetite by infringing the rule of temperance? O look with grief on the many Religious Duties of which you have lost the merit either through motives, which were human, or through tepidity and negligence in performing them! You have worked as one in the world; and not as a Religious. It is time you should renew in yourself the Spirit of your former fidelity, which consists in a religious exact and punctual performance of Monastic duties.

I. POINT. To uſe this Retreat, for the end which GOD deſigned.

II. POINT. To conſider and reſolve on what will render you a faithful Servant.

III. POINT. To Examine your faults, that you may lament and amend them.

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FIRST MEDITATION.

FOR THE SEVENTH DAY.

On the fear and ſorrow unto Death of JESUS in the Garden of Olives.

I. POINT.

MY Soul, ſaid He, is ſorrowful unto Death. Here our Lord found himſelf forſaken, abandoned, and deprived of every help. He had a moſt perfect knowledge and lively Senſe of all the various torments which his Enemies were then preparing for him. Overwhelmed with dread and ſorrow, his ſtrength fails him, he

falls to the Earth, his agony increaſes, his ſweat is as drops of Blood. How great, how lively, muſt his fear and apprehenſion have been! Yet this did not deter him from accepting the Chalice which his Father had prepared for him; and which his love for us engaged him to drink to the very dregs. Shall the apprehenſion of every difficulty, which ſeems ſomewhat hard, deter us from performing our Duty?

II. POINT.

DOes not our Lord ſay to you, what he ſaid to the ſons of Zebedee, can you drink of my Chalice? A queſtion which he propoſes to all that embrace a Religious ſtate. Be not diſmayed, though Nature recoils at the bitterneſs of the Draught. Unite your ſuffering to the agony of Jesus, and beg through his merits, grace to ſuffer after his Example; all derelictions, deſolations, fears, ap-

prehenſions of heart and mind; with all adverſities, perſecutions, humiliations, ſickneſs and temptations; and this as Long as He pleaſes, without departing from the ſentiments which He expreſſed, when he ſaid; Not my will; but thine be done.

III. POINT.

A Senſe of your own weakneſs may cauſe you to diſpond at the ſight of the difficulties to be undergone in overcoming your paſſions & evil habits; were you to attempt to overcome them by your own ſtrength. But if you rely for victory on GOD, to whom nothing is impoſſible; then ſhould your courage be animated & revived. Call to mind thoſe words of GOD addreſſed to St. PAUL. My grace is ſufficient. If ſufficient for him; why not for you? Remember all that JESUS ſuffered, was to diſtroy in you the ſenſual man; which ever delights in va-

nity, eaſe & pleaſure; in procuring relaxations from reſtraint, & in gratifying its diſorderly inclinations. Was it not that theſe inclinations might die in you, that JESUS died on the Croſs? If GOD does not prevent you by a ſingular grace, with which you alſo muſt cooperate; you will be as imperfect after this retreat, as you were before. O my Lord! by Your ſorrow & agony in the Garden, I beſeech You make me die to my pride, anger, malice, ſloth & tepidity; that I may here after live for your glory, the benefit of others & my own Sanctification.

I. POINT. Let no apprehenſion deter you from your duty.

II. POINT. Endeavour to imitate the reſignation of JESUS in the Garden of Olives.

III POINT. You muſt die a Spiritual death, if you would live to GOD.

SECOND MEDITATION.

FOR THE SEVENTH DAY.

On the Crowning with Thorns.

I. POINT.

AFter a moſt cruel flagellation, our Lord was put on a ſtone by his enemies, there to endure a torment till then unheard of. They twiſted a wreath of sharp thorns and with violence preſſed it on his head, while the Blood trickled down his ſacred Face. How was the Sun (that is thy love) diſcoloured there? O! beautiful amongſt the Sons of Men! How have my Sins diſfigured Thee? Is not my Soul that Vineyard which thou plantedſt with ſo much care and ſupplieſt with ſo many helps to enable it to produce fruit? And ſtill it bears nothing but thorns! For ſuch are my Vain, rash, un

charitable thoughts. O my GOD! Grant me a true ſorrow of heart to bewail them; give me thy grace to reject every evil thought, that giving my mind wholly to recollection, there may be no place for vain and ſinful objects.

II. POINT.

REflect that the thorns the jews put on the ſacred head of JESUS CHRIST were not only a Crown of pain and torture; but alſo of ignominy and deriſion; he being conſidered as a mock king. Conſider the humility and patience with which he bore this painful contemptuous crown! ſhall not this affecting ſcene, this moving ſpectacle make ſome impreſſion on my vain glorious and conceited mind? Shall the leaſt word, the leaſt ſhew of contempt, raiſe in me ſentiments of revenge? Shall my Vain and wretched heart be ever panting for the eſteem and applauſe of Men? they put a reed

into his hand, and ſpit on him. JESUS held this ſcepter of ſcorn, in his hand, to teach you to bear humiliations. Follow St. BERNARDS advice. Be not a delicate Member (nor yet a ſenſual one) of that body where of the head is crowned with thorns.

III. POINT.

WHen your affairs are embaraſſing; when diſappointments pierce your heart, O there be mindful of your Divine Maſter. If he ſuffered ſo much, who had only taken on him the form of a ſinner; what ought not the guilty to endure? Did we know the benefit of theſe ſufferings of which we have now ſo much dread, they would become to us objects of deſire; and were we more ſenſible of the Evils that follow pleaſure and delight which we ſigh after ſo impatiently yielding to every paſſion, and gratifying every ſenſe; we then ſhould fly from theſe enjoyments,

joyments, as from ſerpents whoſe ſting is mortal. For though JESUS was wounded for our iniquities and bruiſed for our ſins, that we might be made whole: yet if we refuſe to be healed, and amend not our lives, we ſhall Die in our ſins: and ſhall one Day receive the punishment of our ingratitude.

I. POINT. To keep your mind ſo occupied with good thoughts as to exclude evil ones.

II. POINT. To bear contempt after the Example of JESUS CHRIST.

III. POINT. To conſider the benefit of ſuffering, and the danger of pleaſure.

THE III. MEDITATION.

FOR THE SEVENTH DAY.

On the Crucifixion.

I. POINT.

JESUS went forth to mount Calvary, bearing a heavy Croſs, to teach his followers, that they alſo muſt carry their Croſs if they will come after him; for it is the indispenſable Duty of every Chriſtian and of every Religious, to ſupport with love, that Croſs which he lays upon them. No ſooner is he arrived at the place of Execution than they furiously ſtrip him of his Garment, opening all his wounds a fresh. His ſacred hands and feet they pierce with nails and faſten him to the Croſs raiſed in the air, expoſing him all bleeding to the outrages of an inſulting Multitude. Never did GOD's hatred of ſin appear ſo inexorable,

as in that awful hour. Can we then ſtill love ſin, ſtill be unwilling to ſuffer the leaſt reſtraint, inſtead of ſuppreſſing our Paſſions, and induging our humours, which we know lead us into ſin.

II. POINT.

THE Eternal ſon overwhelmed with the ſins of a guilty World, all which he had taken upon himſelf, was, in the agony of Death, bereft af all interior conſolation in his ſoul, and ſeemed as if he were no longer the object of his Fathers love. The bitter anguish he experienced within his Sacred breaſt forced from him this moving complaint, My GOD, My GOD why haſt thou forſaken me? And in that ſtate of abandonment He gave up the Ghoſt. ſince ſin is ſo odious, and ſince it coſt the ſon of GOD ſo dear, how intenſe ought to be our contrition, how firm our reſolution to avoid our ſins for the future; reſolving ſo to per-

form all our Duties and to reform our paſt conduct in every point ſo entirely, as that we may arrive at the perfection of our ſtate. Pierce, O Lord, my flesh with thy fear" was the penitential prayer of DAVID, and of every one who knows to what dreadful punishments every wilful and mortal ſin expoſes us.

III. POINT

O Religious Soul! place yourſelf for a time a the foot of the Croſs. There contemplate at leiſure the ſuffering ſtate of your Divine Spouſe. He has no where to repoſe his ſacred head, but on his Crown of Thorns. His body all torn and mangled, reſting with all its weight on nothing but the wounds of his hands and feet. Moſt juſtly may the words of the Prophet JEREMY be applied to him. O all you that paſs by the way, attend, and ſee if there be ſorrow, like to my ſorrow. Reflect on the moſt painful auſterities

of Religion. What you find moſt difficulty in ſuffering, in the diſcharge of your Duty, when compared with his ſufferings, how light is your burden? Can you think it too much?

To bear it for his ſake? You are nailed to a Croſs by your three vows; but if you will prove the ſincerity of your love, you ought like him to die upon your Croſs. Here is work for the reſt of your life. You muſt every day die ſpiritually, ſo as to live no more to your paſſions, your pride, your ſloth, particularly your predominant paſſion; thus will you offer to GOD a ſacrifice in union with that which JESUS made of Himſelf on the Croſs.

I. POINT. Ought we not to undergo every difficulty to avoid ſin.

II. POINT. Sorrow for the paſt, & reſolution to perform every duty with perfection.

III. POINT. to die a ſpiritual death.

THE I. MEDITATION.

FOR THE EIGHTH DAY.

On the Reſurrection.

I. POINT.

WHen JESUS roſe from the dead, He became immortal, while His ſacred Body aſſumed ſuch a beauty, luſtre, grace & ſplendor, as renders happy the Celeſtial ſpirits who behold it. What a joy will it be to thoſe, who have ſuffered with JESUS in this world, & ſhared with him in pain & labour, by an exact performance of their duty, to know that his members, will one day be united to their head, in that ocean of bliſs, where they will enjoy all that magnificence of everlaſting glory, if they carry their Croſs here with Him, they will there repoſe in endleſs felicity being aſſured of

partaking thereof, acording to the meaſure in which they have partaken of his ſufferings. Encourage yourſelf, when diſmayed at the difficulty you apprehend in an exact obſervance of duty by remembering the everlaſting happineſs which is promiſed. And ever cherish this firm hope in your breaſt.

II. POINT.

AS JESUS CHRIST in His paſſion was dishonourd by infinite injuries ſuffered for you; will you not endeavour to render honor to him by all the means you can? ever ready to receive for his ſake all the humiliations ſlights & contempts which he shall permit to befall you; theſe being neceſſary to reſtrain that pride, which keeps you far diſtant from Him, which vitiates even your beſt actions. Unite yourſelf by love, with all thoſe who being devoted to his Divine Service, pay their homage

to Him, ſinging Hymns of praiſe to the glory of this name. Every day with increaſing vigor, excite your heart before each part of the Divine Office, to extol His mercies, adore His Majeſty, giving honor to His Sovereignity, from whom you every moment receive new bleſſings & favours.

III. POINT.

HOw magnificent are the rewards which GOD has treaſured up for His faithful ſervants? Oh! unruly & hateful paſſions which prevent us from receiving them, by creating in us a deſire of honor, an inſatiable thirſt of glory, human praiſes, eaſe, intereſt, & pleaſure; oh vanity! emptineſs, & nothing! In this retreat ought you not to learn to die to all theſe things? & by the example of your Lord & Saviour, riſe like Him to die no more? So to quit for ever the grave of tepidity & throw off the winding sheet of

ill habits, leaving all these appenages of death to begin a new life in JESUS CHRIST. If you do not the time will come, when you will repent of having received so many graces in vain.

1. POINT. The labor is short but the reward eternal.

2. POINT. Never to be weary of serving GOD, who is never tired of providing for your wants.

3. POINT. This retreat is lost to you unless you die to sensual desires by restraining them.

THE II. MEDITATION

FOR THE EIGHT DAY.

On the glory of heaven.

I. POINT.

RAise your mind towards heaven, enter into that glorious place, behold the sweet & delightful abode which the blessed enjoy, it is there will befound the fulness of all good, in a far more perfect

manner than the mind of man can conceive. From this ſeat of delight all evil is banished no hardship, no injury, no poverty, nor miſery are felt in this celeſtial manſion; where God is pleaſed to make his magnificence appear in the utmoſt display of his goodneſs to poor mortals, who notwithſtanding perform ſo little for His love, & continue unmindful of all that He has prepared for them: tho his power is unlimited he cannot encreaſe this recompence. For I my ſelf am thy reward exeeceding great, ſays the Lord.

II. POINT.

For whom is this paradice prepared? & to whom is it promiſed? To all, on theſe conditions *viz*: that they love God, with their whole heart, their whole ſoul, & with all their ſtrength, were God to give us all he has created, excepting only Himſelf, our ſouls would not be ſatiated; for He on-

ly is our Sovereign good. And ſuch is His love to us, that tho we gave Him all that is great & glorious on earth, excepting ourſelves, it would all be nothing. This language is intelligible to love which knows there is nothing can ſupply the abſence of its object. The only thing required of us, is to love; & can we think this is too much? Ought we not to labour with unwearied order, to overcome our tepidity & our humour, which ever lead us far away from our duty, & alſo far away from our GOD.

III POINT

CONſider that GOD, who is the ſource of all beauty, wisdom, & bounty; will be the object of our happineſs we shall ſee his face, of whom the ſight excludes all want, & neceſſity. O extatcy & bliſs! what doſt thou my ſoul here upon earth? Canſt thou here find permanent felicity? What doſt

thou ſeek amongſt Creature? Never, no never. Shall thy heart know reſt, till it repoſe in thee, my GOD! O let the remembrance of that happy day, encourage thee to break with a ſtrong arm, every chain by which the Devil withholds thee from giving thyſelf entirely to GODS Service, by the perfect performance of every duty; excite in thyſelf deſires, & ſtrengthen thyſelf by pious reflections on the eternal delights GOD has in His mercy prepared for ſuch short, & ſmall labours. Wilt thou not undergo them for his ſake?

I. POINT. Heaven is prepared for us, & we ſeek nothing but Earth.

II. POINT. The reward will compenſate, all our labours.

III. POINT. Let the greatneſs, of His bounty & love engage our hearts.

III.

III. MEDITION

FOR THE EIGHTH DAY.

On the Love of GOD.

I. POINT.

GOD is very deſerving of our love for many reaſons, particularly for His great perfections & Divine Attributes. When we have acknowledged that He is infinite beauty, unfathomed goodneſs, wisdom & power, that He is the ſource of all that is great & good on earth; or glorious in heaven; we have ſaid nothing in reſpect of what He is. O depth of the riches, of the wisdom & of the knowledge, of GOD, how incomprehenſible are His judgements & unſearchable His ways! O abyſs of mercy! How great muſt thy goodneſs be to permit us miſerable ſlaves to love thee! My heart thou loveſt what is beautiful! admireſt what

is amiable, & art charmed with what is great & noble; & nothing pleaſes thee more than to be beloved; why then art thou cold in regard of God? who is eſſentially all goodneſs both in Himſelf & towards thee?

II. POINT.

Conſider that God has not only loved you from all eternity, but alſo that he has never ceaſed one inſtant to love you, from the firſt moments of your live. Trace back the Divine goodneſs to that early period & ſee the many ſignal favours & marks of it, you have received from His merciful hand: perhaps had but one of them been wanting, you had been a loſt ſoul. From how many dangers which have been fatal for time & eternity, has He not preſerved you? what a number of ſouls are now the victims of his Juſtice while you are ſtill the object of his love & mercy; this recent favor He has done

you in permitting you to make this retreat, is a proof of it. Let not ſloth & tepidity make void thoſe graces which in the courſe of it, He has beſtowed on you, nor thus loſe your crown for want of that courage, to do violence to yourſelf, which is neceſſary from our Lords own words, to obtain it

III. POINT.

COuld you conceive the greatneſs of the love which GOD bears to men, & the extent of His patience towards them. What He requires is love, my child give Me thy heart, you give Him this when all your affections & all your mind tend to Him, you moſt make Him the principal object of your thoughts, & of your whole ſoul; employing all its powers to the Divine honour, & propoſing to yourſelf no other end, in the performance of each duty, than His greater glory. A love of ſenſibility is a favor which God grants not to

all. But every one is obliged to a love of preference, which creates in the ſoul a diſpoſition to ſacrifice all she loves, rather than offend, or not comply with her duty towards Him. Hence God becomes the object of a generous & ſincere love; of a love more proper & commendable than that which has more of nature & leſs of grace.

I. Point. How much God merits our love by His perfections.

II. Point. By His mercy which, we muſt not make void.

III. Point. We are bound to prefer His will before all things.

MEDITATION.

FOR THE MORNING AFTER THE RETREAT.

On the inſtitution of the Bleſſed SACRAMENT.

I. POINT.

" JESUS knowing His hour " was come, when he was to " paſs out of this world, having " loved His own He loved them " unto the end." Of this He gave us the tendereſt proof, not only by words when He ſaid " My " delight is to be with the Chil- " dren of men," but much more by inſtituting the adorable Sacrement of the Altar, that He might remain with us to the end of time;

& thus prevent a ſeparation, ever painful to love. This inſtitution of CHRIST is ſo wonderful that only His wisdom can underſtand, only His Infinite power effect it. It is His love alone that is the cauſe of this inſtitution. If you were to ask JESUS for ſomething more excellent He would answer, that He has nothing, & that there is nothing that can be more advantegious to you, than this gift either in Heaven or Earth; ſince He gives you Himſelf.

II. POINT.

CONſider that the munificence & tender affection of JESUS, muſt render our ingratitude & the coldneſs of our communions very ſenſible to Him; who longed with the moſt ardent deſire, as he Himſelf aſſures us, to give Himſelf to us; acknowledge with confuſion, the very trifling returns you have hitherto made for ſo much love & clemency. Reſolve to give your-

ſelfs up to Him without reſerve; ſeeing He, has condeſcended to be unreſervedly yours. Conſider what you are & what you can do for His glory, Ought you not now to exert yourſelf to the utmoſt in his ſervice? Alas! whence comes it, that your heart ſo ſenſible of the love of creatures is ſo unfeeling of the goodneſs of GOD? Is it not from your eagerneſs to gratify your humour, your paſſions & your love of eaſe? O Lord! Who haſt wrought ſo many wonders in this adorable Sacrament, add I beſeech You to the reſt this one, to ſoften my ſtony heart, & make it obedient, humble & devout: Begin this work I pray You, from the love You bear me, for I have nothing to merit it.

III. POINT.

JESUS inſtituted this Sacrement of love when men were meditating to put Him to death. That however prevented not, the effects of His love, nor the view He had

of all the indignities & irreverences, to be offered Him in this Sacrement. Theſe He overlooked through the ardent deſire of uniting himſelf to us: thus He omitted nothing to gain our hearts. O! who ſhall comprehend the exceſs of His love! Yet it is impoſſible this union ſhould be perfect; unleſs we break aſunder thoſe chains which rivet us to the Earth & to creatures. Be it pride, or be it any irregular attachment whatſoever exert your ſtrength, & break the chain; love is ſtronger than death. But who am I my God who dare to offer You my heart! Remember O my Lord! that vile as it is, You died to ſave it. O deign now to receive it.

I. Point. The proofs our Lord gives us of His love.

II. Point. To yield ourſelves up wholly to His ſervice.

III. Point To be united to God as far as His glory requires it, we muſt abandon every thing elſe.

For after Communion.

THe Day after your retreat having received the adorable Sacrement caſt yourſelf at the ſacred feet of Jesus; & offered Him the reſolutions you have made & with holy importunity asked for grace to obſerve them. Upon Him alone you muſt rely, confiding ſolely in Him who is a conſtant friend & Whoſe help you muſt crave; through the interceſſion of the Bleſſed Virgin & Saints, particularly thoſe you have invoked during the retreat.

The Conclusion of the Retreat.

IT is now my ſoul no longer the time to form good reſolutions, but to execute carefully thoſe which thou haſt made; it is not enough to have entertained good deſigns, but thou muſt put them in execu-

tion. It is not to good thoughts only, but to good deeds that God has promiſed the Heavenly Paradice. The pious ſentiments which I have juſt been committing to paper will be ſo many evidences to accuſe me; if I endeavour not to put them in practice. Behold the Man it will be ſaid, & behold his works; ſee what he thought himſelf obliged to do; & ſee what he has done. I ſhall need no other judge to pronounce ſentence againſt me; for my own conſcience will accuſe me; all the graces & lights with which I have been favoured; will be ſo many witneſſes to condemn me. I will at leaſt read over every month the good purpoſes written by me, in my retreat: & conſider them as dictated to me by the ſpirit of God; in order to excite me to a more conſtant & regular obſervance of them. If the fidelity with which I hope to perform my good reſolutions, cauſes me ſome pain; I muſt remember

that no one forced me to make them, that I formed them for the love of God, & it is for his love I will punctually keep them. A man does with joy what he does through love; & no ſadneſs is to be apprehended while the love of God inflames my heart. If I fail in ſome one of my good purpoſes, or fall into any fault, I muſt not for that be uneaſy, nor ſuffer myſelf to be dejected, but humble myſelf before God & beg Him to pardon my negligence & ſloth, & to reinſtate me in my firſt fervor. If the Devil ſuggeſts to me that God will not always ſtrengthen me, & therefore that this fervour will not always laſt; & that I ſhall not be exact in performing my good purpoſes but ſhall ſhortly relapſe into my former tepidity. I will answer him, that grace will never be wanting to me while I am humble, & that with this grace all things are poſſible to me. Should the whole world, the Devil & my own cor-

ruption riſe up againſt me, for having determined to ſerve GOD with fervour; yet I will keep cloſe to Him who can do all things. I have only to acknowledge my own inability, & to be aſſiduous in craving His grace, through the interceſſion of the bleſſed Virgin MARY, who never rejects a poor ſinner, & I ſhould be inſenſible of her goodneſs, if I have not a ſtrong confidence in her powerful patronage.

The inclination which I feel for a life of eaſe, the repugnance I experience to all that is not pleaſing to nature, the tender care I take of myſelf; theſe are what I ſhould moſt fear, theſe are the greateſt impediments to my keeping of the reſolutions which I have made in this retreat. But that I may triumph over theſe enemies, I will often meditate on the paſſion of CHRIST, & on the delights of paradiſe; I will make prayer my defence, & ſupport my immortal

ſoul

ſoul which God has Created for everlaſting Glory; why doſt thou employ thyſelf ſo much about thy body? Seek not to preſerve its health at the expence of thy duty. Regular obſervance is inconſiſtent with ſingularity delicacy & the ſtudy of eaſe, many shorten their lives by exceſs of ſenſuality in eating & drinking. If I die for the obſervance of my rule will not my death be happy.

OREMUS.

DEUS *qui diligentibus, &c.* See the prayer for the 5th. Sunday after Penticoſt.

O God who haſt prepared inviſible goods for thoſe that love thee; pour forth into our hearts an affectionate Love of thee; that loving thee in all things & above all things we may come to the enjoyment of thy promiſes, which are beyond all deſire. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MEDITATION

IN THE AFTERNOON, OF THE DAY FOLLOWING THE RETREAT.

How Carefully we ought to preserve the fruit of the retreat.

I. POINT.

CAll to mind what you have promiſed to GOD, during this retreat; & conſider, if we ought to keep promiſes made to men, how much more ought we to keep thoſe that we have made to GOD. O my GOD! what grace have You beſtowed on me, when you enlightened me to ſee how far I am from the perfection, that will be demanded of me, & of every Religious at the hour of death. Your deſigns upon me, O Lord! are the deſigns of love & mercy. You called me to this retreat, when I was ſtraying from You, that I might look back upon my wandering

ſteps & on the errors of my tepidity & ſloth; which led me away from Thee to endleſs perdition. What return ſhall I make? I will with the help of Your grace, keep the reſolution I have made; & ſeek nothing but to love & ſerve You; by taking heed of my ways that I offend not.

II. POINT.

IT is not ſufficient to have ſpent ſome time in retirement & to have formed good reſolutions, to render us good & perfect Religious; but we muſt put them in practice, by leading a more Religious life than before. Conſider that you have this day, not ended the retreat but rather that you have begun, & muſt continue it to the laſt day of your life. Be ſenſible of the ſignal favours received in this retreat, from the Divine Mercy. Before, you walked in the ſhades of death, but now you follow the clear light of virtue. Bleſs O my Soul! Him Who has forgiven thee thy ſins,

healed thy wounds, & reſtored the fervour of thy youth, redeeming thee from deſtruction, & who if thou art faithful to the end, will Crown all thy labours, as He has promiſed to them that perſevere.

III. POINT.

RElent not in thy fervour nor give way to tepidity; if you will not expoſe your ſelf to fall into a more dangerous ſtate, than you were in before. For is it not to be feared, that GOD will abandon you to live & die, in your ill habits; if you follow humour & gratify every paſſion? This however dreadful, is the juſt punishment of an unfaithful Soul, who does not correſpond with the graces received. Strengthen me, O Lord! to practice the reſolutions with which you have inſpired me; enable me daily to renew my deſire of ſerving you perfectly; for my depraved nature oppreſſes me like a maſsy weight of a clock always going

down & ever requiring by some mechanism to be wound up. This must be the effect of my mornings meditation. Let the fear of Divine Justice, that fear which is the beginning of wisdom, a fear of offending, which proceeds from an ardent love, accompany you every where, in the Choir at the Divine Office, Meditation, &c. May it influence you in the Refectory to prevent sensuality, and at Recreation, to prevent the least sins of the tongue. To preserve a constant fervour in you, give yourself to interiour recollection, remembering that your thoughts like the hairs of your head are all numbered, & that not one of them shall be unnoticed, but all of them be rewarded or punished

I. Point. God in permitting you to make this retreat has given you a proof of His love & mercy.

II. Point. It is only by perseverance, that you are to become entitled to a Crown.

III. Point. Spare no effort or exertion, lest you lose the fruit of your retreat.

CONSIDERATION

FOR THE FIRST DAY.

I.

ARe you mindful of the end for which GOD created you, forwhich he made you a member of the Catholic Church, and for which He favoured you with a call to a Religious ſtate. On the remembering of the favours, depends the perfection of your life; & the forgetfulneſs of them, is the origin of all your faults, & all your coldneſs in the ſervice of GOD.

II. How do you perform your actions, even the moſt indifferent? ſuch as eating, drinking, ſleeping, recreation &c. Have you been careful according to St. PAULS advice, to direct all to the glory of GOD?

III. In performing the Divine Office, reading, prayer & in your

work; have you been careful to ſeek only to pleaſe GOD, ever walking in his preſence by love & apious intention.

IV. Conſider whether you perform your dutys through cuſtom, to pleaſe Men, or to avoid blame? If ſo, rectify your intention, or you loſe your labour.

V. Do you aſſiſt at the Sacrifice of the Maſs with devotion & reverence, do you offer yourſelf in union with the divine victim to the Eternal Father? Do you communicate ſpiritually? When Maſs ſeems tediously long, remember that the bloody Sacrifice offered on mount Calvary, by your Redeemer, laſted the ſpace of three hours.

VI. Have you in acts of piety, been only careful for the well performance of the exterior, without giving attention to the interior? For we ought to perform the work

of GOD with fidelity, diligence & fervour, that we may not incur the malédiction pronounced againſt thoſe who do the works of GOD negligently. To avoid this we muſt accuſtom ourſelves to reject diſtractions; & under the moſt painful dereliction, we muſt wage war againſt ſloth. Before prayer omit not to place yourſelf in the preſence of GOD, by an act of faith. Truſt not in yourſelf, but humbly expect all from Him.

II. CONSIDERATION
ON HUMILITY.

I.

HUmility extinguiſhes in us the deſire of applauſe, by fixing in our mind a mean & lowly opinion of ourſelves; it renders us ſenſible of our own weakneſs and wretchedneſs.

II. It is the foundation of all other Virtues. Pride in the breaſt

of a Religious expoſes her to fall as Lucifer did from Heaven. That unhappy ſpirit through pride, would not ſubject himſelf to God. Is not this the crime of a proud Religious disobeying her Superior, who holds the place of God?

III. Search your heart with a lamp. "To find if there be no un-" ruly or vain paſſion ſeeking for preferment, through a deſire of honor & eſteem. Let humility alone, be your only deſire.

IV. Do you ſubmit your will & judgment to others eſpecially Superiors, ſuſpecting all that which your own judgment ſuggeſts, knowing how eaſily you may deceive yourſelf?

V. Are you ſenſible of your own propenſity to evil, & that if the mercy of God did not protect you by his grace, you would fall into great crimes?

VI. Be convinced there is no

kind of evil which you do not deſerve; therefore receive injuries, wrongs and conptempt without complaint; & as ſo many punishments juſtly due to you.

VII. Do you never ſpeak from vanity, of your family, your abilities, your meritorious action?

VIII. Do you eſteem others, as better than yourſelf; Their faults may proceed from want of reflection, &c. You know that your own are from malice; Theſe ſentiments will prevent your ſpeaking of the defects of others, & make you willing they ſhould be preferred before you, in regard of habit, diet & other advantages.

III. CONSIDERATION.

ON CHARITY TO OUR NEIGHBOUR.

CHarity is the bond of all virtues" If I have not charity, "ſay's St. PAUL, what will all the

" reſt avail me? Without charity I " am nothing" Examine yourſelf en this ſubject with the utmoſt ſeverity. For it is of the greateſt importance, & a point in which we eaſily deceive ourſelves.

I.

Do you avoid the company of any one, through diſlike or becauſe they have offended you? De you ſhew in your countenance a reſerve in this preſence? Do you take pleaſure in hearing them blamed; or the contrary in hearing them praiſed? Theſe are the marks, take heed of uncharitableneſs in your heart: & with ſuch diſpoſitions how you approch the Sacraments.

II. Are you inclined to put the worſt conſtruction on the actions of others, do you excuſe their intentions, if you cannot excuſe their actions? Have you compaſſion on them, Knowing your own weakneſs?

III. Do you envy those who are commended, prefered before you, & much esteemed? A noble heart blesses God for his gifts to others.

IV. Do you shew yourself ready to assist every one, to forgive their ill usage of you? are you ready to defend their reputation? To alleviate their pains, & never to wound their feelings?

V. Are you cautious not to render suspected the good will of one towards another, by repeating what you have heared or seen, which may create a suspicion injurious to charity?

VI. When you correct any one, does charity influence your heart, does mildness sweeten your words?

VII. when duty requires you to reveal the faults of others, what caution do you use not to exaggerate them, nor to admit any bitterness into your heart? One may support Justice without wounding charity.

VIII.

VIII. Conſider how tenderly the Almighty withdraws from the ſight of others thoſe faults which you Commit, by giving way to humour; He does not divulge, and yet how impatient are you to diſcloſe the indiſcretions of others? Alas we cannot be too cautious never to think, ſpeak, or do that which we would not have another think, ſpeak or do in regard of ourſelves.

IV. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE VOW OF POVERTY.

EVangelical poverty muſt proceed from your heart which voluntarily diveſts you of all property in earthly things by a ſolemn & irrevocable vow. The more univerſal this renunciation is, the more fully you will poſſeſs GOD. All reſerve either in act or deſire; is unworthy of thoſe who have GOD iHmſelf for their inheritance.

I.

Examine. Do you conſider any thing as your own, to waſte, ſpoil, change, or give away at your own pleaſure, without leave from your ſuperior?

II. Have you nothing ſuperfluous; ſuch are two things where one is ſufficient? Have you any thing more coſtly than what is conſiſtent with your vow of poverty?

III. Do you never give or take; any thing without leave?

IV. Are you violently attached to thoſe things which you have leave to uſe? A ſmall matter thus poſſeſſed, will rob you of the honor of voluntary poverty.

V. Do you find fault with your food, bread beer, &c. or your habit as not good enough & wish to be ſerved as the rich in the world? The poor do not complain of

their bread, but are thankful for what they receive.

VI. Have you leave for the neceſſaries which you uſe? If when taken from you, you are diſſatisfied it is certain your fondneſs for theſe is exceſſive.

VII. Are you not too eager to have every thing that is neceſſary? all that avarice craves muſt not be thought neceſſary.

VIII. Poverty diſengages the Soul from earthly things, and thus withdraws from it, many pleaſures which would otherwiſe eſtrange the Soul from GOD.

V. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE.

BY this Vow we preſent to GOD an acceptable Sacrifice, that of our will & our judgment; both which we immolate to Him

by obedience. When we refuſe to ſubject theſe two powers of our Souls by the practice of obedience; do we not withdraw from the Altar the victim which we there offered?

I.

Have you murmured & complained at the orders of your ſuperior.

II. Do you refuſe to follow their appointments?

III. Do you obey willingly & readily? The ſmalleſt demur leſſens your merit & reward.

IV. Do you ſpeak or behave diſreſpectfully to your ſuperior or cenſure & blame her conduct?

V. Do you never give pain to her by your obſtinate perverſe & proud behaviour?

VI. Do you conſider that you muſt render an account of all the diſpenſations which you have ob-

tained from monaſtic duties, by a falſe plea of neceſſity & without a juſt cauſe?

VII. Have you never: procured her conſent, to your ſuperfluities by falſe pretexts ſuch pretexts may excuſe you before men, but will not render you leſs guilty before GOD.

VIII. In the examination of your conſcience, on this matter, you muſt not eſtimate your fault by the importame great or ſmall, of the object thad led you to commit it; but by the difpoſition of your will conſidering always the degree in which your dispoſition was oppoſite to the virtue of obedience. At your profeſſion, you did not vow to do what was the Cuſtom or what was done by Others but abſolute obedience to your ſuperior.

It is properly this vow that conſtitutes the Religious; with ceaſing to obey you ceaſe to be a Religious.

VI. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE VOW OF CHASTITY.

A Religious ſoul eſpouſed by ſacred vows to JESUS CHRIST ought to poſſeſs purity in its higheſt degree, and chaſtity in all its perfection, this implys an innocency of Conduct & manners. But the fidelity due from a Religious to her Celeſtial ſpouſe, is chiefly that of the heart. Therefore.

I.

Do you banish from your heart all attachment to creatures, with every affection that may ſully its purity?

II. Do you behave with ſo much caution as to shew nothing in your deportment; not one geſture, not one look but which is conſiſtent with decency? For you are bound to preſerve both Body & Soul in immaculate purity.

III. Do you refrain from all actions that are too familiiar & unbecoming your ſtate.

IV. Do you remember, you are obliged to edify your Neighbour according to the advice of St. PAUL " Let your modeſty be " made known to all."

V. Do you obſerve the rule relatively to your exteriour? So that nothing may appear in your gait, ſtanding, Habit, &c. But what is becoming the ſanctity of your holy profeſſion.

VI. Do you appear as one recollected not looking on all ſides as you walk along; but, attentive only to yourſelf; nothing is more becoming a Religious than recollection. It ought to accompany you every where, in the Choir, Refectory, and at Recreation. At all times both in ſolitude & company, as if you were ſtanding before one, of whom you were in awe;

and remember, that the Eye of God is always upon you.

VII. Do you walk with indecent hurry? Does decency preſide over your looks? Are your motions to violent or too quick?

Do you hold yourſelf ſtrait, without pride or affectation? Do you ſpeak or laugh loud? Is your air that of gravity & ſweetneſs? Does it mark your whole comportment as well in ſolitude as in converſation? may you be known to be a Religious, more from the modeſty of your behaviour; than from your habit.

Chaſtity thou ſovereign virtue, thou art the faireſt flower of Religion accompanied with external decorrum thou fixeſt the true character of a Religious & commandeſt from men the tribute of reſpect & veneration. Shall I then dread any reſtraint which may improve in me, a habit of that vir-

tue which is ſo pleaſing to GOD, and ſo edifying to Man.

VII. CONSIDERATION.

ON THE VOW OF INCOLOSEURE AND THE PRACTICE OF A RELIGIOUS SPIRIT.

AN officer who wants the ſpirit of his profeſſion will never acquire great renown; nor will a Religious give either honour to GOD or glory to her order, without a ſpirit of Religion therefore.

I.

Conſider, what this ſpirit is? Is it not that which the Rule breaths in all its ordinances, which your vows require that they may be duly performed.

II. Have you the ſpirit of obedience are you docile & ſubmiſſive; ready to give up your own will & opinion?

III. In regard of poverty are you disengaged & disentangled, from all embarassment of earthly things?

IV. Do you profess the angelical virtue of chastity; avoiding every dangerous object or occasion; that may pollute the purity of your Heart & imagination?

V. Have you the spirit of inclosure, or a recollection of mind, accompanied with a dread of worldly dissipation, this being what you renounced at your profession? All eagerness or curiosity must therefore be renouwed, Especially when worldly things are the objects of this curiosity. Your whole Person is enclosed, & your whole person must be retired.

VI. Are you actuated by fervour in the performance of every Religious duty?

VII It is inconsistent with a Religious spirit to be too tenacious of your own opinion, or to main-

tain it at the expence of truth & charity.

VIII. It is for want of a Religious ſpirit that your Heart is ſo cloſely connected with the things of this world, & that you are ſo irritaded when any one takes away, or ſpoils that which is allowed for your uſe.

If by your Profeſſion you died to the world; by the vow of incloſure you were buried in your Cloiſter. Happy is that ſoul which deſcended into this grave & there leads an interiour life; conceious only of her God.

VIII. CONSIDERATION.

ON REGULAR OBSERVANCE.

AS the Evangilical counſels aid us in keeping the commandments So do the conſtitutions facilitate to us the obſervance of our Vows, & our Rule. And

this helps us to arrive at the perfection of our ſtate. God ſuffers nothing to paſs unnoticed, that can give to each action its full weight. If you have hitherto been relaxed, the time of your Retreat is moſt proper for the awakening of your heart & mind, to Religious fervour; attend to the exhortation of St. Paul to the Epheſians; *Renovamini ſpiritu Mentis veſtri.* Be renewed in the ſpirit of your mind: That is correct former abuſes of your life. By a renewal & amendment of your interiour.

I.

Are you habitually neglectful of your Rule? for inſtance; of keeping ſilence, doing each duty at the time appointed, &c. Do you make ſmall account of theſe matters, a contempt of them renders the ſmalleſt omiſſion ſinful.

II. When there ariſes a queſtion concerning any obſervance in your com-

community; do you promote regularity?

III. Are you careful to know your duty? A wilful ignorance will not excuse you.

IV. Are you ever the cause of the irregularity of others by your words or example?

V. Have you sought to introduce relaxation? Have you obtained indulgences from your Superiours? Or have you drawn others from regularity by rediculing them, for observing it? Or have you by any other way softened the rigour of Religious observances?

VI. Is not he in a dangerous state who lives in an habitual breach of the Rule, or constitutions without any intention of a mending?

VII. Do you rise in the morning at the first call, & perform each duty of the day with alacri-

ty? or are you uſed to come too late, to all places of Duty.

VIII. Examine with what fidelity you fulfill every point of your duty. How you obſerve regularity, as to time & place? Whether you do not prefer your own will & convenience to what is required?

IX. Do you complain of cuſtomary relaxations being abolished? & Do you as far as you have it in your power diſcourage regularity in your community? Happy that Soul which at death ſhall hear thoſe words. Becauſe thou haſt been faithful over a few things; enter into the joys of thy Lord.

SPIRITUAL READING
FOR EVERY DAY
OF THE EXERCISE.

FOR THE MORNING OF THE FIRST DAY.

We muſt often call to mind the end for which we entered into Religion.

St. Bernard in his ſolitude often addreſſed to himſelf theſe words. Bernard, Bernard, why haſt thou embraced a Religious ſtate? There is nothing more powerful to ſpur us on to perfection, than often to reflect ſeriouſly on the end for which we embraced this ſtate. We have forſaken the world, and engaged ourſelves in a Religious Life that we may honour God more perfectly, and that we

may work out our Salvation more ſecurely. This was the only object we had in View: If we had propoſed any thing leſs than to obtain our Salvation, we ſhould never have embraced an inſtitute ſo rigorous, nor have ever ſacrificed our liberty to live wholly dependent on the will of another. Whence comes it that this ſtate, for which we had ſo great a deſire, which we were ſo eager to embrace, and to which we ſo humbly ſolicited to be admitted, now excites in our minds and hearts ſo little fervour and ſo little Zeal? Whence is it that, in the Noviciate, we underwent with alacrity ſo many, and ſo great difficultes? Whence is it that, when we pronounced our Solemn Vows, we uttered from our hearts thoſe words, *promitto Deo* I promiſe Almighty God, &c. And that we are now ſo much changed, as to ſeem no longer to be the ſame perſons? Yet Religion is not changed, the Rule is not changed, nor

the constitutions; whence comes it therefore that Regular observance, delightful to many Religious, and once delightful to you is no longer pleasant, but tedious and burthensome to you? that at present you have no longer I say not, a strong desire, but no desire at all nor thought of aspiring to perfection.

" *Obscuratum est aurum, mutatus* " *est calor optimus.* " Your Gold " is tarnished and your beautiful " colour is changed." Would you know the reason of this? It is because you have turned aside from your last end, and labour not to arrive at it. Have you not proposed to yourself another end more flattering to your inclinations and senses? And Hence flows all the evil, and hence you feel no fervour, no desire to discharge your Duties well; and hence you no longer perform your actions in such a manner as to advance toward your last end. If you seriously

think within yourſelf, you will plainly find this to be true conſidering the paſt, you will find that you lived ſo long like a good Religious as you were, mindful of the end for which you embraced Religion. But when you began to furget that end, you alſo began to loſe the ſpirit of your ſtate. Say then continually to yourſelf with St. BERNARD, *Ad quid veniſti?* Why are you come hither? Did you come to ſeek your caſe and to follow your inclinations? To become diſtinguished and honourable? Certainly not. You only embraced this ſtate to ſerve GOD, and merit eternal life: it is for this reaſon you have forſaken the world: and will you now return in deſire to that Labyrinth of error, and deceit from which, with ſo much mercy, GOD has delivered you? Why will you ſeek in this ſolitude any thing but GOD alone, ſince you came to Religion for him only? your Salvation is your

only buſineſs; the only thing neceſſary, this all your thoughts and deſires muſt tend to, if you will ſanctify your Soul. If this be loſt, all is loſt, though you may have gained eſteem from all, and may have accomplished every purpoſe and deſire, all will avail you nothing. By the Solemn Vows of Poverty, Chaſtity and Obedience, which you made at your Profeſſion; you renounced the World, the Flesh, and your own humour ſo far that after this Sacrifice nothing remained. Now therefore you muſt follow; not being at your diſpoſal, the Rule, in which you have profeſſed yourſelf. You cannot be deceived in following it. The dictates of concupiſcence and paſſion are unſound principles; by following them you will be miſled. Therefore I ſay, not as a Man, or as a Chriſtian, but as a Religious, you muſt be guided by your Rule. It will lead you to life everlaſting. For if you conſider well, you will

find that your Rule contains all that is necessary for perfection. Have you received an injury or contempt? Your humour will excite you to resent it, but the Spirit of you Rule, which breathes nothing but charity; prompts you to be on such occasions, humble and meek. Those who refuse to follow it, will sooner or later be brought to confusion, and will become the victims of shame and vexation. To comply with the end, for which you came to Religion, you must perform, each, duty at the time appointed, with all the perfection of which you are capable, without the smallest neglect: for a curse is denounced by the Divine Spirit against those who do the work of GOD negligently. If you allow yourself to fail in one point, you will almost infallibly be unfaithful in others; It is on this vigilance and exactness in your actions; that your perfection depends That is never well done which is done by

halves. It is only perfection that is exact in ſmall things.

FOR THE AFTERNOON

OF THE FIRST DAY.

ON ſelf love, Againſt which we muſt be ever watchful. ſelf love is an effect of corrupt nature, which in every thing ſeeks its eaſe and ſenſual pleaſure. It is ſo ſubtle in the purſuit of every thing which pleaſes the ſenſes, and humour that it is irreconcileably oppoſite to the ſpirit of Religion. And it is impoſſible to advance in the way of perfection unleſs we uſe extraordinary caution in detecting all wiles and artifices. Self love under the pretence of ſeeking GOD, leads us to ſeek only ourſelves, and thus inſtead of the ſubſtance to follow the shadow of virtue. For this, among others is not the leaſt ill effect of ſelf love that it makes us blind. Men can not be ſufficiently

guarded againſt the deceit which it employs in its own ends, and this ſo inſenſibly that we ourſelves are ſeldom aware of it. It carries us away unconſcious of our captivity; and we ſuffer ourſelves to be enticed without ſcruple, becauſe it always miſleads us under the appearance of ſome virtue. If we ſincerely examine the greateſt part of our very beſt actions, we ſhall find many faults ariſing from the influence of ſelf love. Is it not on this account, that the tepid Religious contents herſelf with the loweſt degree of piety without uſing any efforts to reach the ſummit of perfection? It is ſelf love, that diſpenſes with her from labour, and from other duties, leſt she should attempt to do more than she is able, and the ſame principle cauſes her to ſeek in all things her eaſe, and to ſigh only after tranſitory delights, pleaſures and liberty. It is ſelf love which repreſents to her the obligation of

conſulting her health, that she may be enabled to comply with her Duties. Notwithſtanding this exceſſive care is often as injurious to the regular obſervance of diſcipline. From whence ſpring ſo many new and indulgent opinions, as dangerous to conſcience as they are flattering to inclination? For they perfectly coincide with the bent of our ſenſual appetite. It is ſelf love, that, approves and recommands every thing that is agreable to humour, reconciling it to conſcience by this common ſophiſtry that it is right to follow that which is in all appearance without harm; Thus ſelf love hinders us from deſcriminating between the wisdom of the Flesh, and the wisdom of the ſpirit. What is it but ſelf love that relaxes the conſcience, and ſilences remorſe under the pretence of practiſing ſome virtue? Hence anger, hatred, envy, &c. Are often miſtaken for Zeal, prudence, and juſtice.

Here pride is considered as a nice sense of honour; Avarice, as a prudent precaution against poverty; Disobedience, as doing no more than justice to oneself; scandalous murmurs, as just and lawful complaints; Breach of the Rule, as liberty of spirit, and a matter of mere scruple. This self love blinds us to these faults which it causes us to commit. Woe to us, if we be not always on the watch against this enemy of our Salvation. Let us beg the Father of mercy to enlighten us with his grace, and inflame us with his love, For in proportion as the fire of Divine love is enkindled in our hearts, the activity of self love will be extinguished; and in proportion as Divine love decays, self love will be strengthened within us, and will employ us incessantly upon ourselves, either on our persons, or our comforts and conveniences, with a view to nothing but our pleasure, and Satisfaction,

and

and Sacrificing to those both the honour of GOD, and the good of our Neighbour. Thus all will be done for vanity, for pleasure, or interest. And what then remains for GOD or Salvation, since all that is done for the above mentioned motives is of no account? Reflect a little on yourself O religious Soul! What can be your sentiments, you who have retired from the world to serve GOD with greater fervour, and yet discover in your conduct nothing but negligence and indifference? Is this what you proposed, when you entered this Solitude, when you withdrew from the world? No sooner had you began to neglect the exact observance of your Rule, than you employed yourself on earthly objects. Alass can you perform you duties with so little exactness, with so much sloth and tepidity, when you reflect it is GOD whom you are serving?

FOR TE MORNING OF SECOND DAY.

YOu muſt labour to overcome your predominant Paſſion. Every one has ſome predominant vice, and that vice is always ready to flatter our inclinations. Be neither ſurprized nor dismayed, at the trouble it creates, but bear it with patience, as a weakneſs of thy nature. Watch continually to overcome it otherwiſe it may be the cauſe of thy damnation. If we conſider what occaſioned the fall of ſo many great Men as well of the old, as of the new Teſtament, we shall find it was ſome predominant paſſion or irregular affection, which they neglected to overcome. And thus will it be with thee, if thou doſt not fight and conquer.

Lucifer in Heaven had his predominant paſſion. ADAM had one in the Earthly Paradiſe. I alſo have one; but I know not what it is.

Are you willing to know it? Examine your Conſcience cloſely; obſerve into what ſins you fall moſt frequently, to what Evil your inclination leads you, what fault you ſeek moſt to excuſe in yourſelf, and alſo what fault you find moſt difficult to overcome. It is from this paſſion every kind of ſin takes it riſe. Perhaps yours, is only an inclination to Idleneſs, to relaxation, Curioſity, or a vain deſire to be eſteemed and praiſed by Men, to ſeek your eaſe on all occaſions, or to criticize the conduct of others, to judge and cenſure them. Can you ſay what harm is there in theſe things, That there is harm, you will find one day to your coſt, unleſs you make ſome vigorous effort to amend. By often relapſing into the ſame fault; that fault becomes habitual; we no longer reſiſt the temptation, and, by not reſiſting it, we fall into ſin, and this through a kind of neceſſity, which we have brought

upon ourſelves, a neceſſity, that leads to diſpair, and at laſt to final impenitenc. Thus is fulfilled that terrible threat of JESUS CHRIST. "*In peccato noſtro moriemini*" You shall Die in your ſin, obſerve JESUS CHRIST ſays not, "You shall "die in your ſins," but in your ſin. What is this ſin in you? no other than that which is the effect of your predominant paſſion? The inlination you have for Idleneſs appears to be of little conſequence but mark well the dreadful path to which it leads. Idleneſs is the Root of all evil; it is the parent of indolence and inattention. To theſe if a Religious inſign herſelf, she will omit her Work, and thus omit an important duty.

On Sundays, through neglect of reading or writing, the hours ſpent in her Cell become tedious; therefore she loiters about the Cloiſters repairs to the Infirmary, or looks out for Secular company. Beſides Idleneſs prevents a Religious from

doing with fervour what is her Duty. It renders prayer and all ſpiritual occupations heavy and painful. It deters her from even the attempt to overcome any vice or ill habit. It renders her unwilling to undergo any thing for a ſiſter. It is an obſtacle to the ſucceſs of any great Work. It hinders all approach to perfection in any one point. It cauſes a certain heedleſneſs, which alone is ſufficient to banish al recollection, and to prevent us from performing any one action well ſloth never attempts any thing great for the glory of God. It deprives us of all the ſpiritual wisdom which may be obtained through Mental prayer, for the favours of God are not the rewards of ſloth, but of activity and vigilance. Nor are other faults, if unreſiſtingly yelded to, leſs fatal, however trivial they may appear. A ſpirit of relaxation excites in A religious; tho poſſibly unobſerved, a deſire to promote whatever may relax and

weaken a ſtrict obſervance of the Rule; does it not ſeek to introduce relaxations to the prejudice of Religous discipline. Of theſe she may think the fault will fall only on the ſuperior, without whoſe permiſſion she would have done nothing. But be aſſured that they who have ſollicited the grant of a diſpenſation from regularity, from the Rule or ſtatue, without a real neceſſity, will be ſtrictly answerable not only for their own ſouls, but for thoſe of the whole community, which may poſſibly never conſent to a reform. Is not curioſity alſo an occaſion of ſin, to the Soul that willingly continues it? How many temptations would she have avoided, by not seing or hearing this or that thing? How many rash judgments, jealouſies, reſentment, and cenſures, from which she cannot eaſily, or does not extricate herſelf without Sin. Beſides curioſity cauſes not only ſins of thought, but often alſo of words highly prejudicial

to charity, and which may effectually prove to be of ſerious conſequence. Vain glory is alone enough to deſtroy all the merit of our actions. A proneneſs to judge and cenſure the conduct of others is productive, as all know, of the moſt dreadful effects. When you conſider all this, can you ask what harm is there in following, a natural inclination? What means therefore muſt you employ to overcome the paſſion, that predominates in your Soul? Recommend yourſelf to God, and put all your confidence in Him. Excite yourſelf to a horror of that Vice which ſo much endangers your eternal Salvation; uſe violence to yourſelf, and from that paſſion which leads you to ſin, take an occaſion to aſpire to the ſummit of the contrary virtue. A Religious ought to ſhun every kind of vanity; for she has renounced the world not only at Baptism, but when by the light of reaſon and faith the deceits of

it, she again renounced it at her ſolemn profeſſion. How deplorable therefore is the conduct of that Religious who after having forſaken the world; after contemning with becoming scorn all its riches, honour and pleaſures; builds in her own heart a little world of vanity, who having been ſo ſuccesful as to weather a violent ſtorm in making for the harbour of Religion, the ſure haven of Salvation, ſuffers shipwreck at laſt from a ſlight temptation! How lamentable that they who have triumphed over all the Dangers and tempeſts of the World, and have broken aſunder its ſtrongeſt chains, should want force to shake off its weakeſt fetters of all. There is no other cauſe than that, by yielding to temptation, they have fallen from GOD, and that he abandoned them to their own weakneſs. How rediculouſly blind is that Religious, who condemns Worldings for being dazzled with the falſe glare of va-

nities, Riches, Honours, Pleaſures, and luxury of Dreſs; while she is herſelf more abſurdly blind in her attachment to trifles within the very walls of a Cloyſter! while she is over nice as to her habit & her perſon and affected in her gait, &c. While she feeds her vanity & curioſity with the very objects of her devotion, for inſtance with Beads, pictures, Medals, &c. And is vain of ſo trifling a thing as a ſnuff box Handkerchief, Gloves, Lamp and ſuch other ſmall matters. How unworthy of a Religious are theſe contemptible vanities! how degrading in her ſtate is all complacency in Birth, Talents, the eſteem of Men & ſuch trifles. And why is all this to be accounted vanity? becauſe none of theſe things carry them to their laſt end, but on the contrary lead them far from the path of that perfection which their ſtate requires At Death they will infallibly diſcover the vanity of ſuch things.

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FOR THE AFTEROON OF SECOND DAY.

On Zeal.

THe firſt Virtue that is diſcoverable in Religious, who from tepidity & lukewarneſs are riſen to fervour, is Zeal, This conſiſts in an ardent deſire to obſerve with exactneſs all the Rules & conſtitutions, & to reform all the abuſes that have gained ground to the prejudice of Regular Diſcipline. Happy they who perſevere in Zeal to their Death. It is a virtue peculiar to Religion; it honours God, Edifies our Neigbour, & ſecures our Salvation. But we muſt be cautious leſt our Zeal become vicious from being ill directed, immoderate or indiſcreet. Of all Virtues Zeal, is moſt ſubject to imprudence, ſo caſy it is to miſtake the impulſe of paſſion, for that of Zeal. As all that gletters is not

Gold, ſo likewiſe all that has the appearance of Zeal is not true virtue. We know true Gold by the touchſtone, and true Zeal by its diſcreetneſs. Can we think that ſuperior diſcreet, who conſiders the leaſt defect in her ſubjects as ſo many notorious crimes & who to ſhew her Zeal, corrects with ſeverity the moſt venial imperfections? They who are prompted by indiſcreet Zeal, have not a right ſpirit, nor ſufficient light to ſee & acknowledge their own faults, This violence of Zeal is an artifice of the Devil who deſires nothing more, than to deſtroy confidence of ſubjects, in their ſuperior and that harmony which ought ever to ſubſiſt between them. How often has the moſt virtuous communities fallen into diſorders through the indiſcretion of a few who took ſcandal at ſmall matters, & though really ſuch, conſtrued them into grievous offences? Therefore let us be careful; for under a falſe

Zeal there lies often a lurking pride, that is ſcandalized at every thing, that complains of and cenſures every Perſon, & every action. Let us guard ourſelves againſt Zeal, it is a moſt important advice, as againſt that which may produce a ſerious evil; I mean that misplaced Zeal, which is the deſtruction of our own peace of mind, & productive of uneaſineſs, troubles, & diſcontent in others. Though it be good to wish that others may be holy & virtuous, yet it betrays a want of judgment to deſire that all others should be led the ſame way as ourſelves. " *Omnis ſpiritus laudet Do-* " *minum* " Let every ſpirit praiſe the Lord. Let us recommend our Brethren in Religion to GOD, & try to give them good example: nothing more is required. Be zealous when it is your duty but firſt conſider well whether it be a true or falſe Zeal. True Zeal is directed by reaſon: This allows nothing to be done without firſt con-

considering it with attention. On the other hand false Zeal is led on by passion which is precipitate & Blind. Passion deceives us; It influences too often our best actions, & never is more successful than when it is masked with the appearance of Zeal, & a desire of doing good. It wounds under pretext of healing, & strikes at the person instead of the fault. True Zeal as St. Paul observes; is under the discretion of knowledge, " *Secundum Scientiam*, " It is ever Considerate, prudent, & above all Humble. & Charitable. A false Zeal is accompanied with a secret pharisaical pride. It accuses another, to justify; itself " *non sum sicut ceteri*: " I am not like other Men: such a one is tepid, but I am a strict observer of Regular Discipline & a true Religious. An enlightened Zeal pleads guilty of the faults committed by others, & is ever willing to bear fraternal correction, & to listen to reprehension. True

Zeal is ſweet, tender & compaſſionate & is moved by no other motive than that of affection for mankind. It is a ſevere judge of itſelf, & a tender Mother to others.

Such a Zeal has been in former ages highly honorable to the church. Such was that of the Martyrs, whoſe fervent Zeal cauſed them to lay down their lives for the Faith. This virtue animated the Confeſſors to teach & inſtruct the faithful, & to propagate the Chriſtian Religion. Where is the Convent, now flouriſhing in piety and Regularity, that is not indebted for both, to the Zeal either of her own Members or other holy perſons?

Zeal ought to be the diſtinguiſhing Virtue of every Chriſtian. How abundantly does God communicate his heavenly graces to thoſe who are zealous for his honour. How active was the zeal of Chriſt for his Fathers glory, when He was upon Earth? How fierce-

ly did this holy fire of love burn in the Breaſt of all the Saints.

St. PAUL exhorts the Corrinthians by the example of the public combatants to exert a ſimilar Zeal for the Glory of GOD, & Salvation of their own ſouls They who contend in public games ſays he, refrain from every thing, that may be hurtful to them; yet it is only for a corruptible crown that they contend. Having entered the courſe, ſtretch forward with pious alacrity, & ſo run that you may gain the prize.

FOR THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY.

On Peace of Mind.

THere is no one, who does not naturally love peace & tranquility of mind. Whence comes it therefore that notwithsſtanding this natural deſire, we are ſo often disquieted & perplexed? It is becauſe

we are tenacious of our own opinion, & too much attached to our own will & the things of the world; becauſe Selflove reigns in us, becauſe we purſue objects with too great eagerneſs, ſet ourſelves in oppoſition to the Divine Providence, & will have that which pleaſes us, & not that which is pleaſing to God. A Religious permits herſelf to be disquieted, becauſe she is disappointed in ſomething which she propoſed; becauſe she has received an affront, or a sharp & peevish word. On theſe & the like occaſions, when you begin to experience trouble of mind, ſay to yourſelf; what means this diſturbance, & diſſatisfaction? Does it not plainly prove that I am a proud, Vain & weak Creature; that I ſeek & love myſelf too much? Never should I be ſo uneaſy were I not full of ſelf love. To recover therefore my peace & to preſerve it with others, I have only to overcome ſelf love, the only

tyrant of my mind. Hence the humiliations that from time to time fret and provoke me; are the direct means to recover my peace of mind, since a good use of them will enable me to mortify my self-love, & to repress my pride.

You are sometimes disturbed, because you cannot accomplish some work, which you have begun for God's greater Glory. This is an illusion of self love; whenever you find yourself disquieted & uneasy, be assured that it is not the Glory God which you seek, but your own will The Glory of God, consists in your being humble & wholly submissive to the Divine will; & since that will is that the business you have undertaken, should not succeed, you ought to be resigned. If you truly seek Him in your undertaking, bear patiently your disappointment, & receive it, with out complaint, from Him who thereby mortifies you with a view either to

punish your ſins, or to make trial of your fidelity & increaſe your crown. We muſt never be diſturbed in mind; not even for our ſins. It is the common error of a heart ill-regulated, to feel more vexation, than reſolution to amend, & to weep over its crimes, more as the proofs of its own weakneſs, than as offences againſt God. Our duty is, after ſin, to be ſorry for it, without being anxious, & to make firm purpoſe of amendment. Diſquietude after a fall is the occaſion of falling ſtill more grievously. We muſt therefore void all ſcrupulosity & dejection of mind, as the effects of a vain & proud heart, too little Conſcious of its own weakneſs, & too confident in itſelf. Humility ſhuts the Door to ſcruples & anxieties, gives hopes to Confidence & peace to the ſoul All the Saints who were truly humble, were by no means regardleſs of ſmall matters; but it was without being ſcrupu-

lous. Thoughts of fretful disquietude proceed not from God, who is called the Prince of peace " *Princeps Pacis*; " they are suggestions of Satan, who is the Prince of darkness. We must therefore resist them. A Religious who discovers trouble of mind & grief in her countenance, does an injury to God, whom she seems to consider as a severe Master, in whose service there is no comfort. She scandalizes others, to whom she is the occasion of forming a thousand rash judgments concerning the source of her vexation. She mortifies superiors & also her fellow subjects in the community, & renders herself troublesome to all; who knows not how to deal with her. If any one shuns her company she thinks, she is not considered but neglected & disregarded. She becomes miserable to herself by indulging her fancies, ill temper & endangers her own salvation, by becoming the dupe of satans artifice & im-

poſture. For he fails not on this occaſion to repreſent to her, the enjoyment of ſenſual delights, as the only remedy againſt this inward trouble & dispondency of mind. A diſcreet & virtuous Religious preſerves on all occaſions her mind unruffled & undiſturbed.

Though she feels within herſelf the painful ſtruggles of a corrupt nature ſtill she receives all with a chearful countenance & a tranquil mind, as coming from the hand of God. By the edifying example which she gives it evidently appears that it is not paſſion but grace which preſides in her ſoul. This is what you muſt endeavour to aſpire to, as well to preſerve both interior & exterior peace, which is one of the fruits of the Holy Ghoſt; & a means not only profitable but neceſſary to arrive at perfection. Look to yourſelf & never deſire any thing with a paſſionate fondneſs. Endeavour to live in a ſtate of indifference & of perfect conformity to the will

of GOD, without any violent attachment; thus will you always enjoy the sweets of liberty & peace.

FOR THE AFTERNOON OF THE THIRD DAY.

The neceſſity of avoiding hypocriſy.

I Will never ceaſe to inculcate, that you muſt shun Hyprocriſy. We read in hiſtory that Sinners of every degree have been converted & afterwards become eminent Saints; but ſcarcely one hypocrite do we find to have made a good end. We read in the Holy Scripture; that a certain Hypocrite ſought to be admitted as a Diſciple of JESUS CHRIST, but that our Lord rejected him. And what invectives has He uttered againſt the Jewish hypocrites? What threats, what reproaches, what woes has He not pronounced againſt them? How often has He warned us to be careful, leſt we should be in-

fected with this vice. It is not without reaſon that Hypocriſy is in ſome ſort eſteemed Atheism, becauſe it leads us from God, & ſeems to ſuggeſt that the eye of God ſees not the ſecrets of man's heart, & that we may content ourſelves with a counteſeit appearance of Sanctity. The Hypocrite is he who finding himſelf there, where virtue is eſteemed & honourd; ſtudies by a thouſand ways to paſs for a virtuous man, that he may receive the incenſe of praiſe due to the virtuous. He ſeeks not to be a good Religious in the ſight of God, but only to appear ſuch in the ſight of men, from whom he covets honour & eſteem. As the fabricators of falſe coin cover baſe metal with gold or ſilver, that it may be thought true & lawful to alſo the hypocrite, conceals a myſtery of iniquity under the shew of piety & devotion. But when unnoticed & alone he throws aſide the mask & reſigns himſelf to eaſe & voluptuouſneſs.

In public he would appear ſevere towards himſelf; in ſmall things he affects to be extreamly ſcrupulous, & to be ſcandalized at almoſt every thing. He ſpeaks well of the duties of men, but performs little, leſs then he ſeems to do outwardly. He appears to pray & be virtuous, but it is only appearance & exterior. In reality he ſeeks only himſelf, & this not always without disappointment. Sometimes a man becomes hypocritical to indulge his vanity. He feels an inward joy at being noticed by the world, & at being thought holy & devout without any pretentions to that character. Thus he reſembles a ruſtic in the habit of a nobleman, for whom he wiſhes to paſs, that he may command reſpect from thoſe who know him not.

Ambition is in Convents frequently the occaſion of hypocriſy. As Offices of truſt are committed to perſons of ſolid virtue, & examplary life, whoſe ſtrict regularity,

& happy temper shew them qualified for Office, hence women of aſpiring minds display an edifying exterior without the reality & ſubſtance of thoſe virtues, which can alone fit them for Superiours.

Thanks to the Allmighty, there are always thoſe in Religion, who being perſons of prudence, & diſcretion are able to diſcover genuine from counterfeit piety. A pretended Saint therefore cannot long escape detection in a Convent. It ſoon appears whether he has true humility, patience, & obedience, which are the unequivocal marks of a truly Religious ſpirit, GOD never fails to confound theſe hypocritical Saints, thus to obviate the ſcandal, & to repair the injury occaſioned to genuine virtue. For hypocrites are the cauſe that even true Religious are often conſidered by the world only as Religious impoſters. Guard with extreme watchfulneſs againſt this fault, & examin ſtrictly your conſcience, that

that you may discover if you are not one of those who through the Devils artifice deceive themselves, as well as others. It is not an easy matter to know yourself; for however far you may be removed from solid virtue yet by performing outwardly some good actions, you may be deceived, & may be insensible to your own vanity. Though this is perhaps the end of all your performances. Therefore beg of GOD to enlighting your interior. Accustom yourself to speak sincerely the sentiments of your heart, that by uprightness & sincerity you may please GOD, & may have nothing in view but His honour regardless of what men shall say. This disposition is entirely contrary to falsehood which is the source of duplicity & deceit & which pretends to import to men our sentiments while we think quite the contrary to what we say. As great a horror as a man should have of lying & double dealing, so

great & not leſs should be his love of ſincerity & truth, giving evidence that divine grace has the aſcendant in his mind, heart, & tongue, & that his words are entirely conformable to his thought & works. This ſincerity is generally eſteemed by the whole world as a mark of probity, & if all ought to be ſincere, ſurely a Religious ought to ſurpaſs all others in the practice of ſincerity. Endeavour therefore to be perfectly ſincere with your Director, with your Superior, & with all in general both Religous & Seculars. Avoid all cunning & deceit, all exageration or depreſſion of perſons or things either above or below the ſtandard of truth. Praiſe not what is contemptible, nor deſpiſe that which is praiſe worthy. All inſincerity is prejudicial to human ſociety. Fly it therefore not merely for appearance but from a pure love of truth, the ground work of your faith & beleif, & from an imitation of the

God whom you adore, in whom there is no shadow of deceit, in short from, a desire to maintain peace & harmony, & to support the honour of your state & profession. Nothing robs a man sooner or more effectually of his credit or claim to be believed, then a character of cunning & deceitfulness, because all men hate to be deceived. Therefore be resolved never to deceive, either for an excuse or any other reason however plausible; but remember that the God whom you serve, is the God of truth If through inadvertance you have been betrayed into an untruth, repair the fault, & unsay what was untrue, particularly if it be prejudical to another. Love sincerity & in your words never deviate from it. There are occasions, in which you are not obliged to speak what you think. In such cases prudence, & the regard you owe to truth obliges you to be silent but never, never is it permitted to speak an untruth.

Let Charity be the companion of your ſincerity. For the obligation of being ſincere; does not imply an obligation of publiſhing all that you know. Sincerity without diſcretion; where ſilence is a duty is a breach either of Charity or Prudence.

But you muſt be particulary circumſpect in your conduct to thoſe who are above you, leſt humain reſpects ſhould lead you to flattery; by admiring in them what you can not approve. Keep an eye alſo upon your conduct to thoſe who are your friends or favourites, leſt blinded by affection, you applaud that which you ought to condemn and never let intereſt betray you into an acquieſcence, in that which your conſcience teaches you to blame.

FOR THE MORING OF THE FOURTH DAY.

On the endeavouring to be perfect.

THough you have forſaken the World, and entered the cloyſters of Religion. Yet you may not be perfect, but are certainly obliged, to aim at perfection. That is, you are obliged to endeavour to pleaſe GOD, to overcome your paſſions, and to acquire all the virtues of a Chriſtian. In this divines are unanimous. And ſpiritual writers give this reaſon, that when you quitted the World; you at the ſame time renounced it; and when you pronounced your ſolemn Vows; you by them engaged yourſelf to acquire that degree of perfection which is annexed to the Religious ſtate. It is for this reaſon you made the three Vows which are to conduct you in the way to perfection. By your ſo-

lemn Religious engagements you promised to walk in that way, and consequently to aim at that perfection to which it leads. This obligation is so strict that what before your profession was voluntary and a matter of counsel, after it becomes a matter of duty; so that if you do not aim at perfection, you are forgetful of your vocation, and faithless to your Vows. And when you think not of it and feel no desire to obtain it; is this aiming at perfection? Or when conscious of many imperfections, you use no endeavours to overcome them? By a contempt of perfection you shew a contempt of Gods mercy in calling you to this heavenly state, that you might become holy; " *Vocavit nos ut* " *essemus Sancti*," *says St.* PAUL.

Do not slight or disregard the Holy spirit, who has favoured you with so many inspirations, lights, and interior helps, for no other end, than to kindle in your heart

an increasing fire of Divine Love. By a contempt of perfection you contemn JESUS CHRIST, that beautiful model, whom the Heavenly Father sets before your eyes for your Imitation. By it you contemn your holy Founder, who is honoured by the Sanctity of his children, and who ardently desires that they should continually advance from that which is good, to that which is better. In short you contemn your holy profession, that comfort and support of perfect souls, who in it are provided with everything; as well in sickness as in health, that they may be undisturbed by care, and may attend only to their Sanctification. Moreover your contempt of perfection; exposes Religion to the derision, of the World, which knows not how to seperate the idea of sanctity in a state, from that of sanctity in its members. Consider the danger to which your lukewarmness leads you. You are obli-

ged under ſin to tend to perfection. I will not ſay that every time you fail you commit a ſin, but I maintain this opinion of all holy men; that a Religious expoſes herſelf to the danger of ſin by habitual tepidity.

Not to advance in virtue, is to go backwards; ſays St. AUGUSTIN.

This conſideration makes a true Religious push forward, with a determined reſolution in ſpite of that ſtrong propenſity to ſenſuality; which enables ſatan to triumph over thouſands.

I Conjure you ſays St. PAUL in his Epiſtle to the Epheſians, "To "conduct yourſelves in ſuch a "manner as becomes the ſtate to "which you are called." I alſo requeſt of you the ſame this day.

I conjure you to obſerve well the Rule and Conſtitutions of your Order, and to walk worthy of the ſtate to which you are called. You ought to think, ſpeak, and act on-

ly as becomes a Religious. In every place private and public, always behave as one whom, GOD has mercifully called out of a wicked Word to this holy ſtate; and as one who in virtue of your ſolemn Vows ought to aim in a ſpecial manner at perfection. As a Religious, you are brought forward in a diſtinguished ſcene, where Heaven and Earth are ſpectators; on the ſtage every one ſtrives to perform well his part.

He who appears in the character of a prince, is careful to act as becomes a prince. Even harlequin with all his geſtures endeavours to act his part to the very life. The excellence of an actor is not to repreſent a perſon of rank, but to ſuſtain well the character, whatever it be, of him that he perſonates.

Now what is your Character; you who are Religious? Certainly of your founder, who was a follower of JESUS CHRIST. Hence you

made a promiſe to obſerve his Rule, to put on his habit; and to be called in ſome degree by his name? But do you imitate him? Do you think, ſpeak and act like him? To fulfill your obligation in every plaec either in Choir in Refectory, in your Cell, in ſolitude or in company; you muſt ſuſtain the character of a Religious on all occaſions, and muſt act as if you were in the preſence of an awful ſpectator. The eye of GOD is always upon you; and your behaviour ought to differ from that of the worldling, as much as your Habit.

FOR THE AFTERNOON, ON THE FOURTH DAY.

On the avoiding of exceſſive hurry and alſo of ſloth and tepidity.

A Fundamental maxim of Devotion is to perform well all the duties of your ſtate, for theſe are ſo many ſigns of the divine will to

which it is your buſineſs to attend in Religion and ſince your perfection conſiſt in the due performan- of your duties. for this is what you will be judged upon, you muſt be ſolicitous not only to perform them in a becoming manner. Oftentimes exceſſive hurry on the one hand; or tepidity on the other, makes you work, takes away their whole worth and thus you loſe the merit of them. This hurry is an eagerneſs to do many things at once or to finish one thing in haſte, that you many preſently go from that to another. This over haſtineſs diſturbs the peace of your mind, diſtracts your thoughts precipitates all your motions, while it prevents the excerciſe of your judgment and reaſon. It banishes grace, and ſuffers you to do nothing well The ſoft showers which gradually moiſten the Earth makes it fruitful, and quickens the vegetation of both Flowers, and Plants; but thoſe heavy rains which deſcend in tor-

rents do great injury to the fields and gardens. You never do well that which you do Haſtily.

Gods will is that you take heed, and conſider the things that he enjoins you, and not that you perform them with ſo much hurry, as to prevent you from liſtening to the ſuggeſtions of grace; or to other pious conſiiderations; when you do your duty. But what attention can be given to theſe conſiderations? While you are actuated by paſſion and give the whole of your attention to the mere outward performance? You cannot expect that God will work in you by his grace, for He is not there where noiſe and confuſion reign.

Non in commotione Dominus. Experience ſhews us that when we act thus; nature is the only principle of our actions, and that we are influenced by no ſupernatural motive.

Hence Jesus Christ rebuked Martha, ſaying to her, *Martha Mar-*

Martha, ſolicita es & turbaris erga plurima." Martha Martha, you are ſolicitous about many things." He did not reprehend her for waiting on him, which was a good work, and commendable; but for her exceſſive eagerneſs, which occaſioned in her unneceſſary trouble and anxiety; and this certainly was blameable. She would have all done in haſte; and Jesus warned her, that a work can never be well done when performed with hurry, and that he does his work quick enough, who does it well, and in the manner in which it ought to be done.

There are ſome occaſions in which haſte is required, when many things muſt be done in a given time. Yet when this happens, be careful to be the more attentive to perform that which you do. For if a thing muſt be done with ſpeed you muſt be more ſollicitous to act with prudence and moderation ſo that your mind be free, maſter of

itſelf and all its motions; and never omit to do your work both in the act and intention for the glory of GOD. It is adviſeable on theſe occaſions to conſider that you cannot perform all at once, but firſt one thing and then another, and therefore that you ought not to think of them all at once, but only of that which you are actually about, and to which you should give as much attention as if you had nothing to do after it. It is good to look forward, that you may be more able to conduct your affairs and perform each of them well, in due time and place, always allowing the greateſt share of diligence and attention to works of duty.

Let all your actions be influenced by religion, and ſerious reflection.

Be alſo attentive, Nor muſt you avoid with leſs care, the contrary evil, tepidity. For if exceſſive hurry be the fault of a mind too eager

and too warm, tepidity is the fault of a heart too cold and inſenſible. " *Qui feſtinus eſt offendit.*" He who runs too faſt ſays the Holy Ghoſt, fails not to ſtumble: but He alſo who performs negligently the work of GOD draws a curſe upon himſelf. " *Maledictus qui facit opus Dei* " *negligenter.* "

Every action you perform as a Religious perſon, is a work pleaſing to GOD; for you do it in obedience to Him. As in a royal eſtabliſhment all the officers from the Kitchen of the King to his bedchamber, are in the Kings ſervice; & may be ſaid to be employed in his work; ſo alſo in Religion both, ſuperiors & ſubjects do each in their reſpective poſt the will of GOD, & conſequently perform the work of GOD. And as in the ſervice of a Sovereign we ought to avoid remiſneſs leſt we ſhould incurr his diſpleaſure; ſo is the Religious much more obliged to ſhun tepidity; leſt ſhe draw upon herſelf the

Divine indignation. We must serve Him with joy & alacrity, with fidelity & devotion: where as the effects of tepidity are melancholy, sloth & indevotion.

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FOR THE MORNING OF THE FIFTH DAY.

Instruction for Religion.

OF all the truths of Religion, which makes the subjects of your Meditation in this retreat; there is not any, which may not be profitable to you, & conducive to your perfection, if you consider them with proper attention. That the wonders of the Divine mercy may be perfectly accomplished in you. Add to the subject of your meditation, the following admonitions, & make your advantage of them.

Sing to God hymns af thanksgiving, extoll His goodness, & bless for ever His mercys, for having called you to Religion & there-

by preſerved you from that deluge of iniquity with which ſo many not leſs deſerving of favor, are now overwhelmed in the World. You have received from the Divine predilection this diſtinguiſhed favor (for which you owe Him eternal thanks) of being at reſt with the Dove. Taſte, in this ſequeſtered abode the pure delights of ſolitude, nor ever envy Worldlings their degrading pleaſures. Aſpire not to the unnatural enjoyments of ſuch as prefer the moſt loathſome food, to the heavenly delight of a calm & ſerene conſcience.

At your ſolemn Profeſſion, you entirely renounced the World. See that you meddle not with its concerns. You have overcome the World; rejoice at your victory. The World muſt be dead to you, & you to the World. Never admit thoſe to your friendſchip who live conformably to its maxims & who have imbibed its ſpirit; a connexion with ſuch muſt be prejudi-

cial to you. For by turning back to the inhabitants of that Land of death you must catch the breath of its pestilential air; an evil not to be less dreaded than pestilence. By such connexion how many spouses of JESUS CHRIST have been robbed of the immortal Crowns which they had gloriously won? If you throw your self into the danger, have you not reason to fear the same misfortune? Imagine not that you will be able to bring those of the world to GOD, who come to visit you; it is more to be feared that they will withdraw you from Him. Use the same caution in frequenting the speak-house which you would at going into an infected place. Rarely does a Relious work the conversion of a Worldling; but too often does the Worldling pervert the Religious.

There is no closer tie than that of Blood, this notwithstanding must be broken, nor must you consider any as akin to you, but those

who do the will of your heavenly Father. Pray for your friends often; ſee them ſeldom. Parents & friends are frequently obſtacles to the perfection of their children. If you have not yet obſerved this, it is becauſe you have not been careful to notice what ever is hurtful or a hinderance to your progreſs in the way of virtue. Obſerve well thoſe fetters, which while they bind you faſt, alſo withold you from running with alacrity in the way of the Evangelical counſels; & you will be convinced that the greateſt obſtacles to ſalvation are thoſe of flesh & blood.

All Chriſtians are bound to live in charity, but this obligation is much greater on all Religious; & particularly on the auſtins, on account of their Rule; which is to have but one heart & one ſoul in GOD. But all you daughters of ſion, ſpouſes of JESUS CHRIST, ye faireſt portion of His inheritance; be ever careful, by concord & per-

fect Charity to ſupport, the glory of your Order. What infinte evils ariſe from diſcord? Is not this the baneful ſource of ſcandal & diſorder? You who have the honor to be eſpouſed to CHRIST; muſt live only for that heavenly ſpouſe. It is Him, for Him & like Him, that you muſt live & die If His will be not, that you ſuffer a violent death, as He did for you; His will certainly is, that your life be ſpent in continuall mortification; which is a ſpiritual death If you love Him, you will love one an other for His ſake; if you do not, you are not worthy of Him,

Banish from your heart all ſenſual love: for only in proportion to the disengagement of your heart from all worldly affections, will the heavenly flame be Kindled in it. O may that flame never be extinguished! For be aſſured, GOD will be diſpleaſed if any other object share the affections of that heart which was given without reſerve to

Him, Whoſe awful preſence ought to fill its inward Sanctuary.

Read no books, but ſuch as may ſtrengthen you more in that faith, without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God, none that may excite thoſe paſſions in you which will not be calmed without infinite difficulty. Read only ſuch, as will create in you, an increaſing horror of all that retards the advancement of your Soul towards perfection. Such infine, as will ſuggeſt theſe or the like reflections to you on your death-bed; how happy was my time ſpent in reading this or that book, which even now is a comfort to me, becauſe it aſſiſted me once to live, ſo now to die in the love of Jesus Christ.

Al though no evil were to follow in regard of the heart, from the reading of unprofitable books, yet were the diſſipation of mind & loſs of time, enough to banish them from places, ſacred to devotion & holy ſolitude.

Be careful to fly Idleneſs; a Religious that is always well employled, has only one enemy to encounter; but the ſlothful Religious muſt fight a whole legion.

Your daily duties are ſo many ſteps that lead to perfection. O! deſpiſe not one of them, how trivialſoever it may appear; for otherwiſe you will fall backwards inſtead of advancing. Small faults are ſeldom commited without occaſioning others; & a ſlight infidelity is commonly the forerunner of a greater.

To be remiſs in the uſe of the holy Sacraments is a fault greatly to be feared, & conſtantly to be avoided. The councel of a wiſe & prudent Director, muſt be to you a law that you ought never to transgreſs.

Write no letters which you are not obliged to write; either from a ſenſe of duty, or from ſome other motive of charity or Religion. When you write remember

that you are to be judged upon that as well as your other actions; therefore ſeek by it to promote the glory of GOD, & edify them to whom you write. Whatever you undertake, impart to it ſome of that ſanctity which is the ornament of a Religious.

Have nothing in your dreſs furniture, or other things which is in any degree inconſiſtent with poverty, or with any other branch of monaſtic perfection.

Let your words, your works, your gate & whole deportment be edifying; ſo that you may every where defuſe around you the sweet odour of JESUS CHRIST Should the moſt laborious & humiliating task be impoſed upon you; be ever ready to ſay, "Behold the hand-"maid of our Lord." And always be rejoyced to accomplish the Divine will with your whole heart.

FOR THE AFTERNOON OF THE FIFTH DAY.

On the neceſſity of being uninfluenced by human reſpects.

TO be influenced by human reſpects is baſe & unworthy of a Religious. By them she is led to conſider in her works the pleaſures of Man, & not of GOD. She fears to be deſpiſed & rediculed by Men. Thus the dread of the cenſures & reproaches of Men cauſes her too often to do what she ought not; & to omit that which she ought to perform. Thus a fraternal correction, which is of obligation, or a wholeſome admonition, which charity recommends is omitted, from a conſideration of what others may ſay. It is a duty to practice patience, & meekneſs on all proper occations; as well as every other virtue which our circumſtances may admit; Now human reſpects

reſpects occaſion you to overlook theſe duties, leſt you be deſpiſed by others, as ſcrupulous & ignorant. Alſo human reſpects prevail on you not to change & reform your life. They diſſuade you from perfection, & reconcile you to that ſtate of ſloth & tepidity wherein you paſs your days; not withſtanding the Almighty loudly admonishes you, in your interior, to watch & labour with the utmoſt fervour, that you may become holy.

You fear that eternal ſuggeſtion of pride, "What will they ſay," though you are not ignorant that the virtuous will rejoice at your change. Yet to pleaſe the ſlothful & tepid you forſake good & follow evil, thus impoſing ſilence on the inſpiration & admonitions of the Holy ſpirit.

It ſeems wonderful that, in Monaſtries which are the aſylums of holineſs, & among Religious who profeſs to ſerve God in perfection;

there should be ſometimes found thoſe, who draw others from this perfection. But be not ſurprized, when you reflect that even among the Apoſtles there was one, who cenſured St. MARY MAGDALEN weeping at the feet of JESUS. GOD in his unſearchable providence, permits theſe temptations to try your fidelity. For it is ſufficient to reſolve ſteadfaſtly, by GOD's grace, to overcome theſe temptations, & to triumph over them on all occaſions.

Was it from a view to pleaſe men, that you became a Religious? What an outrage do you commit againſt GOD, when you make more account of his creatures then of Him. If you had for witneſs of your conduct a prince & his ſlave, you would aſpire to pleaſe, not the ſlave, but his Royal Maſter. Still in your actions can you ſay you do not aim to pleaſe men rather than GOD, who is ever preſent & beholds this unreaſonable & crimi-

nal preference? The tepid Religious, is not ashamed to appear tepid; why then are you ashamed to appear in ſupport of virtue, by a ſtrict obſervance of regularity?

Often you have outbraved human reſpects to gratify your inclinations: do you now tremble at the voice of men, when you are called upon to ſerve God & reform your conduct? You will never taſte happineſs till you have ſhaken off entirely the bondage of human opinion, & till you are become ſubject only to God. Act with freedom when & where it is your duty; unmindful of the cenſure or applauſe of men.

In the licentiousneſs of the army it is not ſtrange to hear a ſoldier reproach his comrade with being conſcientious. Nor ought you to be ſurprized when you find in Monaſteries, them that ridicule the piety & regularity of others; more regular than themſelves. But what ſhame & confuſion will it be to

you, at the hour of death; to recollect the many good thoughts which human reſpectes induced you to put away, & the many good works, which you neglected on the ſame account. Can you think it will be any excuſe for your ſloth & tepidity before the ſovereign judge, to ſay you would have lived as a good Religious; had you not feared being deſpiſed by others? Remember the threat which JESUS CHRIST denounces in the Goſpel; That, if any one be aſhamed of Him, before men, He will alſo be aſhamed of him before His Father, & will expell him from the company of His Elect, in the preſence of the whole World.

" What ſhall I return to the " Lord, Said the Royal Prophet, " in thanksgiving for all the favours " which He has heaped on me? " I will fulfill my vows to the Lord " in the ſight of all His people." Such ſhould be the language, of every Religious. What return ſhall

I make to the Lord; to shew my gratitude for such signal favours received from His infinite goodness? I will punctually fulfill my vows, & place my true glory in observing them. such are the exact sentiments which you ought to extertain; being ever mindfull of the solemn vows you have pronounced. These constitute a Religious; & you became one the instant after you had pronounced the vows of Obedience, Poverty & Chastity. But only the observance of them can make you a good Religious. You must therefore be literally obedient, poor & chaste, according to the letter of your vow. She who seeks not perfection, but is content with the mere performance of her common duties, is not a Religious; & has nothing but the exterior of Religion. You must endeavour to observe punctually your vows; & that from the motive of divine love. This will animate you to a strict observance of them, & cause

you to find your treasure in poverty, your delight in chastity & your glory in obedience.

The Vow of poverty forbids you to keep any thing as your property, or to possess any thing either superfluous & costly. The love of poverty will render you always content, even when necessaries fail you, & will prevent you from complaining of your wants. It will cause you always to seek the worst & most despicable things for your use, in your cell, your cloathing, & in every thing that is allowed you. It will increase your comfors in propotion to your poverty. Covetousness makes wordly men watchful & ever careful to increase their riches. A love of poverty, will make you studious to heighten the sufferings of poverty.

The Vow of virginity obliges you to renounce all carnal pleasures. Chastity is not content with purity of the body but also aspires to purity of heart. How extremely

jealous should you be of this Angelical Virtue? & how fearful of every the leaſt danger?

Chaſtity leads a Religious to avoid carefully all particular connexions, all dainties, all delights, &c. & excites her to watchfulneſs, prayer, ſolitude, recollection, penance. mortification, & to every practice that may ſerve to preſerve the moſt perfect purity. She deems it not ſufficient to avoid impurity, but flies the very shadow of it; & is more anxious to preſerve her purity than the vaineſt of worldlings is to preſerve her beauty.

The Vow of Obedience obliges you to do all that your Superior orders. But a love of Obedience makes you will nothing but what your ſuperior wills, obeying her with pleaſure & alacrity, & ſubmitting readily to her commands. Nothing can be more indiſpenſable for the attainment of perfection which you are bound to purſue, than a love of Poverty.

Chaſtity & Obedience, which implies a deſire of obtaining theſe virtues. this deſire ſtimulates you to embrace the means of obtaining them; & the uſe of theſe means conducts you to the object of your deſire.

FOR THE MORNING OF THE SIXHT DAY.

On the neceſſity of watching over your tongue.

THoſe who do not reſtrain their tongues, ſays St. James, have only the appearance of Religion; obſerve this maxim; an attention to it is indiſpenſably neceſſary to every Religious perſon. A right uſe of the tongue conſiſts in ſpeaking when we ought to ſpeak, & in keeping ſilence when we ought to be ſilent. Nothing ſeems more eaſy than ſilence. Yet of all ſciences this perhaps is the moſt difficult. Men in the World have innumerable

ſchools, wherein they may learn the art of ſpeaking properly both as to time & place. The Fathers of the wilderneſs agreed in this, that he, who cannot hold his tongue, cannot be poor in ſpirit, cannot be chaſte, obedient or humble; for the holy ſpirit is a lover of ſilence & recollection, & cannot abide in a heart, where ſilence is not regarded. The ſpirit of wine, however ſtrong, evaporates & loſes its excellence, if the wine be not cloſed with Care. We may ſay the ſame of the ſpirit of God. We may Loſe in the idle chit-chat of one half hour all that we have obtained from the prayers of a whole month. The ſpirit of piety is very ſubtle & eſcapes more eaſily by the mouth, than by any other way. Silence is not leſs neceſſary for our own peace than for the peace of others. Hence that common ſaying; " *Audi*, " *vide*, *tace*, *ſi vis vivere in pace.*" " Hear, ſee & be ſilent, of you will live in peace."

In a community, we should do nothing but hear & ſee. If we were to tell every thing that we hear & ſee what a noiſe & confuſion would there not follow? the confidence you have in a perſon is often the cauſe why you impart to him that which should be kept ſecret, but conſider that the ſecret which you diſcloſe to your friend, will by the latter be communicated alſo to his friend. For others have their boſom friends no leſs than yourſelf. Thus from diſcloſing to others our ſecrets, things come to be known, which ought never to have been mentioned. Accuſtom yourſelf to ſpeak only of indifferent matters, that you may be more on your guard in matters of importance. However valuable may be your communication, yet your ſilence will generally be ſtill more to be valued. In the ſame ſchool, wherein men learn to be ſilent, they alſo learn when they ought to ſpeak. But one

& the other muſt be regulated by prudence. The firſt rule wich holy men deliver upon this ſubject is to ſay nothing displeaſing to GOD. You muſt therefore banish from your converſation all backbiting, all bitter & offenſive words, all tendency to redicule or ſatire. It is not abſolutely ſufficent that your discourſe be not evil; it ought to be virtuous. According to St. THOMAS, a Religious ought not to ſpeak of any thing but GOD, & of what is edifying. The tongue only ſpeaks from the abundance of the heart. When therefore a Religious ſpeaks of vanities, it is a ſign that her heart is full of vanity. Let prudence direct your words. Accommodate yourſelf to your company, & fear not ſometimes to entertain your companions by promoting innocent mirth In ſpeaking to your Superior, obſerve due reſpect & reverence: & if you talk with her for any lenght of time, be cautious leſt you either outrage truth

by the flattering your Superior, or leſt you wound Charity, by criminating others without juſt cauſe. When you ſpeak to your equals, let nothing appear, but ſweetneſs & modeſty. Whoever may be in your company, let them learn from the charity of your converſation, that you are not one of thoſe who are inclined to ſpeak ill of others, or to take pleaſure in hearing others ill ſpoken of, thus you will enjoy true peace.

FOR THE AFTERNOON OF THE SIXTH DAY.

On the Neceſſity of Watchfulneſs.

"WAtch overſelf," is the advice which St. PAUL gave to his dear Diſciple Timothy, & which you ought to conſider as alſo directed to yourſelf. Be not buſy about the affairs of others. It always betrays either pride or indiſcretion. Therefore avoid it; unneſs

leſs thy duty, charity, or neceſſity require it. Sometimes you may think, youwould do well to engage in ſecular matters, particularly when requeſted by worldly perſons, under the pretext of charity, & the glory of God. Diſtruſt this kind of charity; for by degrees you will find yourſelf overwhelmed with ſecular cares, & always greatly to your disadvantage. The glory which God, deſires is that you be a true Religious, & that you lead a holy life. A Religious should not trouble herſelf, nor interfere in marriages, Law-ſuits, or other worldly affairs. Theſe are quite foreign from her ſtate. A Diſciple once asked of Jesus leave to go & bury his father, & to ſettle his family concerns, Jesus told him to leave the dead to bury the dead; that is, to leave to worldings the care of worldly things. On another occaſion Jesus aſſures us that he who engages in worldly buſineſs, after having once

forsaken it, is not fit for the kingdom of heaven. If however you are obliged to take upon you any temporal concerns, do it not, till you have first asked good advice, & till it be enjoined you by your Superior. Keep a strict watch over your heart, trouble not yourself about the world; endeavour to remain ignorant of its cares & concerns. Curiosity concerning what passes in the world, is unbecoming a Religious, & if she omits to mortify this curiosity, she will experience the evil effects of it. To such a one we may apply what Jesus once said to St. Peter *Quid ad te?* What is that to thee? *Tu me sequere.* Follow thou me. Attend only to what God requires of you. *Tu me sequere.* What does it avail you to know what is doing in the world; or even in the convent. How improper in a Religious to be always ready to hear & see whatever is transacting in the monastry. Trouble not yourself about the

proceedings of your ſuperior, nor judge her intentions. Reflect on theſe words; *Quid ad te? Attende tibi.* What is that to you? Attend to yourſelf." Buſy yourſelf only with your own concerns. In order to keep your Soul in peace, & to maintain peace with others, it is adviſable to put this queſtion to yourſelf, *Quid ad te?* This is nothing to me, this is not my buſineſs. Look well to your own actions having no other concern but to examine your own conduct, to judge, & confeſs your own faults. You have enough within you to employ all your attention, without loſing your time about thoſe things, which concern you not. Curioſity is the cauſe of much evil; and idleneſs is the cauſe of curioſity. He who is employed with his own concerns. does not enquire what news, nor inform others what degree of cold or heat there is. And for this reaſon, becauſe he is well employed. If he be queſtioned about

news, he tells you he has no time to enquire after it, having more weighty matters upon his mind, ſuch should be the language of a Religious whoſe only labour ought to be to obtain the kingdom of heaven.

FOR THE MORNING OF SEVENTH DAY.

On the obligation of becoming true Religious & truly interior.

IT is in the interior that one Religious differs from another. The outward duties are common to all. They keep choir together, eat in the ſame refectory, perform the ſame exerciſes, & all lead the ſame manner of life. But that which makes one Religious more perfect than another is the interior. As amongſt the ſtars one shines brighter than the reſt; ſo amongſt Religious in ſame convent, one is often found, who viſibly outshines

the reſt in the way of perfection, though she neither recites longer prayers nor practices greater auſterities than the reſt of the community. If you examine the true cauſe of this, you will find, that she is recollected on all occaſions, that she is influenced by ſupernatural motives in her moſt ordinary actions, & performs them all with purity of intention. Such a one does all that which is done in a common life, but she does it in no common manner. If she prays, eats, or diverts herſelf, it is not done through cuſtom, neceſſity, human reſpects, nor through ſelf-love, but purely for the love of GOD. This love directs her intention; and hence she makes wonderful progreſs in the way of virtue. For perfection does not conſiſt in the performance of exterior works, but in the performance of them with a good intention. O that men could but ſee the ineſtimable value of the interior ſentiments of

a pious Soul, and how pleaſing theſe are in in the ſight of GOD! It is the pure and upright intention of the heart, which enobles & qualifies our actions, " *Lucerna corpo-* " *ris tui eſt oculus tuus.* " It is which gives light to the body ſays our Saviour. Your works partake of the nature of the end which you propoſe to yourſelf; if that end is evil however holy the work may be in itſelf, yet will it be infalibly evil. Alſo if the motive of your work be natural and merely human; however noble the work may be, it can rever be meritorious of an everlaſting reward in heaven. Therefore you muſt endeavour as much as poſſible to render all your works ſupernatural, never propoſing to yourſelf any other view in what you do, than the good pleaſure of Almighty GOD, whoſe will it is that you ſhould honour him by ſuch or ſuch a work; perform that work from a deſire of complying with His Divine will, and of

giving Him pleaſure. Be ever mindful that your intention gives that dignity, and ſtamps that value on your actions, from which theſe derive their title to an eternal reward. What has been ſaid ought to induce you to act always in this meritorious manner. It is a merit which you may obtain at all times and places, and even then when you are not actually employed, God, being highly honoured by the uprightneſs of your intention. Amongſt your different employments, there are ſome that are good in their own nature, as the recital of the Divine Office, frequenting of the Sacraments, prayer, meditation, &c: Other employments are ſo many duties, being enjoined by the ſuperior. Some alſo are voluntary & of choice. Some are merely cuſtomary ſome that regard thoſe only who are in office. We may diſtinguish again ſome employments not cuſtomary, but only occaſional; ſome which

are pleaſing to nature, and agreable to your inclination, while others on the contrary are painful, and require a holy violence to perform them. Now of whatever kind be your employment, it cannot take up your attention ſo entirely as to prevent you from making an oblation of it to GOD, at the beginnin, in the courſe, and at the concluſion of it, nor from expreſſing your intention of pleaſing Him by it. This method of acting, when followed, is only known to GOD; and ourſelves; and is conſequently leſs likely to become the ſubject of vain glory, or the occaſion of pride. How comfortable is it to reflect that without any extraordinary effort, you may arrive at an extraordinary degree of ſanctity! What encouragement to receive at the hour of death, everlaſting glory in return for the ſufferance of ſuch light & momentany labour.

FOR THE AFTERNOON OF THE SEVENTH DAY.

On prayer.

IT is a maxim in a Religious life. A maxim made evident by daily experience that a good Religious is she who prays well; & that she is better in proportion as she prays better. On the contrary it may be safely affirmed that she who does not pray at all, has nothing of a Religious; & that she is a bad subject who flies from prayer, as from the object of her aversion. If you seriously & impartially examine yourself, you will be obliged to confess the justness of this maxim. For own sincerely, when did you live as a good Religious? Was it not when you endeavoured to pray well? And in the same degree in which you lost the spirit of prayer, did not you also lose the spirit of Religion, & even the grace

of GOD. Learn then from your own experience to be hereafter more fervent in prayer. You continually ſtand in need of the grace of GOD, to know Him & love Him, to know & humble yourſelf, to diſcover the disorders of your Soul, & to apply to it the proper remedies, to obſerve your evil inclinations which lead you to ſin, & to overcome your paſſions. In short you ſtand in need of GODS grace to make you conſcious of your paſt infidelity & ingratitude that you may atone for them, by contrition & penance. But how will you obtain this ſo neceſſary aid from heaven without the help of prayer? GOD does not uſually give the graces requiſite for the performance of duty except to thoſe who importune Him by fervent & continual prayer." *Bleſſed be* GOD, *cries* " *out the Royal Prophet, who has* " *not deſpiſed my prayer* nor with- " drawn his mercies from me."

" *Benedictus Deus, qui non amovit*

" *orationem meam & miſericordiam* " *ſuam a me.*"

The mercy of God & the prayer of man always goes together, & walk as it were hand in hand. If you omit prayer God will withdraw his mercy from you. Do you imagine you are able to live without food, to fight without arms, to labour without ſtrength, & to work out your Salvation without the grace of God? It is prayer that ſupplies you with all theſe neceſſary helps. In vain will you excuſe yourſelf at the laſt day by ſaying; " I would have done this, or that " thing, if I had been aſſiſted by " Divine grace." The judge of men will anſwer; " It depended on " you to have obtained it, " In effect God is ever ready to give you his grace, if you pray for it. The grace of prayer is never wanting, every one can ask & in this grace is comprehended every other. But she will not avail herſelf of this firſt grace, nor have recourſe to prayer,

can have no ſincere deſire to hear thoſe eternal truths, which would force her to a change of life to a forſaking of the vanities of her heart, the real cauſes of all her miſery, ſuch a one only deceives herſelf. In a well regulated community, where every true Religious deems it a duty to mortify her curioſity. Now it is impoſſible that you can arrive at this; without the help of prayer. Be aſſured then, that prayer is abſolutely neceſſary to your ſtate, & be careful as far as poſſible, that you never omit it.

All the founders of Religious Orders have been men of prayer, & all have earneſtly recommended it to their followers, especially mental prayer. St. FRANCIS prefers the exerciſe of prayer, at ſtated times, to all other Religious duties however excellent. Nothing is more meritorious than to labour in the converſion & ſalvation of ſouls: yet St. FRANCIS allowed not his Diſciples to omit the duty of prayer for

for that of preaching. The rule of charity requires that we firſt endeavour to ſecure our own ſalvation before that of others. It is true, when we ſpeak or write on ſpiritual ſubjects to others, we can not but reflect on them our ſelves; ſtill there is a great difference between that, & the application of thoſe truths to our own Souls. A medicine is of ſervice to him who takes it, not to him who preſcribes it. A man is often the ſlave of his own paſſions, while he exhorts others to break their chains. But the benefit of prayer is to apply a remedy againſt the infirmities of our own Souls. If you omit your prayer on this or that account, you will come by degrees to omit it for every trifle. Dread this evil: for who knows but you may be aſſaulted by ſome violent temptation, & be ſubdued by it, from having omitted your prayer.

FOR THE MORNING OF THE EIGHTH DAY.

On obſervance of Regular diſcipline.

AS the Solemn profeſſion, & regular obſervance of the three vows, connects you with all religious perſons in general, ſo the obſervance of a particular rule conſtitutes you a member of a particular order. Thus, the obſervance of the rule of ſaint FRANCIS makes the FRANCISCAN & the obſervance of the rule of Saint AUGUSTIN, makes the AUGUSTIN the ſame may be ſaid of other orders. They who obſerve not their particular rules are Religious but in name. She who obſerves not the rule of Saint BENEDICT Saint AUGUSTIN &c. Is properly ſpeaking, no BENEDICTINE no AUGUSTIN; she only wears the habit. But that which diſtinguiſhes Religious or-

ders one from another, is the rules & conſtitutions. For why do Religious take their names from their Orders? Only that it is ſuppoſed every one lives conformably to the rules, conſtitutions, & practices of his reſpective order. She who does that which is preſcribed at the time, the place & manner, ordained by her conſtitutions, may be ſaid to be a true Religious.

But if she neglects regularity, & diſpences with herſelf from obſerving the rules of her order, we may ſay of her when dead, that she lived ſo many years in that convent, & wore the habit of that order; but not that she was a Religious of that order; for nothing but an exact obſervance of regular diſcipline will make you in the ſight of God a member of this or that order. When Almighty God, in His ſpecial goodneſs, called you to this order, & you were happily received into it; He required not only that you ſhould obſerve the three

vows, which are common to all orders, but that you should obſerve the practices of this particular order, to which He called you. Therefore you may be ſaid to be unmindful of your vocation, if you comply not with your rule & conſtitutions. Some Religious incumber themſelves with a thouſand different practices of devotion; they recite every day many & long prayers; and they read various books of ſpirituality, without any obligation of doing theſe things. In all this they follow their own humour & inclination. But notwithſtanding they are ſo exact that were they to omit one of theſe voluntary devotions, they would feel a remorſe at the omiſſion, as if they had neglected a divine appointment; yet as to the conſtitutions of their order, which are ſo many unequivocal declarations of GOD's will, & which they ought moſt ſtrictly to obſerve, they think little of theſe ſcarcely a day paſſes in which they do not neglect

ſome of them with little or no remorſe. O how lamentable is this blindneſs? To be ſo carneſt in doing our own will, & ſo negligent in performing the will of GOD? I do not deſpiſe nor blame theſe voluntary devotions. On the contrary I value & eſteem them, & believe there are few of the Saints who have not practiced them; & few who do not owe to them many ſingular graces. To do only what we are obliged to do, betrays a ſervile ſpirit, not that of a generous lover. But this I maintain, that the firſt devotion of a Religious is to obſerve punctually his rule. All other devotions are works of ſupererogation; Religion is not concerned in them; but the obſervance of your rule & conſtitutions is an eſſential duty, without which it is in vain to aſpire to Religious perfection. Perform whatever devotions you pleaſe; you will never advance one ſtep unleſs you obſer exactly your rule and conſtitutions.

The graces which God communicates to your order, will never reach you but through this channel; as the blood in our bodies muſt paſs to the extremities through the veins. Upon a ſtrict attention to this diſcipline of your order your ſalvation aſſuredly depends; as on the other hand a neglect of your rule will certainly draw ruin on your ſoul. The perdition of ſo many Religious, who are now in torments, was occaſioned at firſt by ſome ſlight breach of their Rule; if that may be called ſlight; which calls down the wrath of God, & provokes Him to eſtrange Himſelf from a ſoul both here & herafter. Therefore value highly your Rule & hold it in unrivalled eſtimation. Apply to it what the Wiſe man ſays in the following words. *Audi fili mi diſciplinam Patris tui.* Hear child of Religion the conſtitutions of thy Holy Founder. *Et ne dimittas legem Matris tuæ.* And overlook not the law of thy Mother.

(holy Religion) *ut addatur gratia capiti tuo.* That thou mayeſt deſerve to be adorned with grace on earth, & to be crowned with glory in Heaven.

FOR THE AFTERNOON ON THE EIGHTH DAY.

On the ſtation of a private Religious.

OF all the ſituations in a Religious community, leaſt dangerous is that of a private Religious, her duties being leſs complicated than thoſe of a ſuperior; she bears not the weight of ſo many, or ſo great obligations upon her: encounters fewer dangers & therefore may with more eaſe work out her ſalvation & arrive at perfection. If this be your ſituation, then your attention muſt be given to theſe three branches of your duty; firſt your duty to GOD, ſecondly to your Superior; & thirdly to your

equals; when you shall have discharged these obligations, you will have fulfilled all justice; provided you shall have acquitted yourself in the manner which God reguires. This in regard of your Superior, is to consider her as being in the place of God; invested with His autority, & appointed by Him to watch over you, as having to give an account of you, to Him hereafter. If you were persuaded of this, you would never fail to shew her becoming respect, honor & obedience, sensible that to omit this is a disrespect to God Himself, whom you dishonor & whom you disobey in the person of your superior. Convinced of these truths you must comply with the orders of your Superior as if they were issued by the Almighty; and what ever difficulty you may experience you must without hesitation, imitate the prompt obedience of *Abraham* to sacrifice Isaac; by a disposition equally willing, to sacrifice your own will.

If you ſee any imperfections in your Superior, be not ſcandalized at it, nor wanting in your obedience. As the word of GOD is not leſs holy or reſpectable though preached by an unworthy Miniſter; ſo alſo His orders muſt be no leſs obeyed by you, though delivered by a Superior not wholly exempt from faults. Altho your Superior should treat you with ſeverity you muſt not be offended, but in ſuch treatment you muſt embrace the opportunity which GOD affords you of ſuffering humiliation, of mortifying your ſelf love & of acquiring great merit. Adore the decrees of the Almighty ever equally adorable, whether they diſpence comfort or chaſtiſement; & caſt your eyes upon JESUS CHRIST crucified, who in obedience to the will of His Father humbled Himſelf to the death of the Croſs. Embrace with comfort & joy theſe opportunities of imitating your Divine ſaviour. If others murmur or

complain; unperverted by their example; do you become by your exemplary ſubmiſſion like another brazen ſerpent to them, that beholding your ſubmiſſion they may be healed. Whether guilty or innocent, accept the correction, though it were ſevere, of your Superior; with true patience & humility, in atonement for your ſins. Excuſe not yourſelf, but rather like the juſt man, become your own accuſer; & punish yourſelf, without waiting the ſentence of your Superior. Very likely it is only the too great tenderneſs you have for yourſelf, that makes it appear hard, & as if more was expected of you by your Superior, than in reaſon she ought: & that your punishment is unmerited; bow down in profound humility without complaint, let not a word of reproach eſcape from you, except againſt yourſelf, deſerving as you do ſtill ſeverer punishments. If others leſs ſubmiſſive, should ridicule the prompt-

neſs of your ſubmiſſion or the punctuality of your obſervance, be not diſturbed; but perſwaded that God permits it for your advancement in perfection.

If your Superior be indulgent or partial to you, avail not yourſelf of her diſpoſition to obtain favors from her which would injure her conſcience, & alſo your own; by gratifying injudicionſly your humour. Uſe your influence with her to promote the glory of God, the benefit of the Community, & of every individual. The only wish, which you ought to make in regard of your Superiors, is that you may always have ſuch as may direct you in the path of perfection, ſuch as may ſhew you, your defects, & may correct them, ſuch as may tell you what you muſt do, & what you muſt avoid to lead the life, & die the death of a good Religious.

All the obligation of a private Religious to her equals is compri-

zed in that short ſentence " Do as " you would be done by " She ought to love all with one common charity, but to have no particular freindships. According to that Rule of St. AUGUSTIN " Let " there be no ſenſual love amongſt " you" How happy is that community where charity flourishes, of ſuch a community one may ſay without fear of mistake; that the ſiſters are all diſciples of JESUS CHRIST. Charity being a certain proof that they are ſuch.

A PRAYER

TO BE SAID ON THE MORNING AFTER THE RETREAT; IN WHICH YOU PROMISE TO LEAD A NEW LIFE.

O Lord, I acknowledge that now all ought to be new in me. My heart, my words & my works, I muſt now labour to become a new creature in you. Alas! it is now time

me that I give myſelf up to you without reſerve; that I correſpond with the deſigns of your mercy, in calling me to a Religious life, & that I endeavour to execute them with inviolable fidelity. Till this hour I have advanced very ſlowly in the path of perfection; nor have I been admoniſhed by the continual lapſe of time ever advancing; to exert myſelf with becoming vigour. I regret to ſee a life over charged with ſin & entirely unprovided with good works. There only remains for me to atone for the paſt by redoubling my attention, care & labour; to repair the loſs my ſoul has ſuſtained by my former tepidity. By your grace, O Lord! I will now renew my interior, by a vigilance over all its motions, & by a conſtant attention to direct all its affection towards you. Nothing created ſhall have any ſhare therein. You formed it for Yourſelf & I ought to devote it unreſervedly to You. I will watch over my

tongue, & all my ſenſes to the end I fall not into ſin; I will guard them with greater circumſpection. My actions ſhall be regulated by obedience, & my conduct by our holy Rule. I ſincerely lament to ſee my ſoul ſo full of faults, ſo ſubject to paſſion ſo void of virtue. But I place all my confidence in you, O my GOD! & hope for Your grace to accomplish the reform I purpoſe; & now ſay with Your holy Prophet " In thee O Lord have I » hoped, let me not be confounded" Deliver me from my miſeries according to your bounty, & haſten to my ſuccour. The enemies of my ſoul, environ me on all ſides, but I find in You my GOD, a protector and refuge.

In the way through which I am to paſs, You O Lord ſee the ſnares that my enemies have laid for me. Save me O GOD of my ſalvation! Into Your hands I commend my outward ſenſes, that no pernicious impreſſion on them may be an

obſtacle to my ſanctification. To You I commend my underſtanding that no idle or vain thoughts may imploy it, but that it may be conſtantly filled with thoughts of piety. I recommend to You my heart that no earthly affections may be found in it; none but ſuch as draw me nearer to You. I lay at Your feet, O Saviour of my ſoul, theſe my reſolutions of amendment; that I may labor to ſuppreſs my paſſions, overcome my pride, my will & ſelflove; & may enter into the path of virtue; by which I may arrive at that perfection which You O my GOD, require of me! What ſhall I offer to obtain the grace I want? I will offer the Blood of my Saviour, shed for my redemption; & truſting in Your mercy I will after my retreat enter on the execution of my preſent pious reſolutions; depending for ſucceſs wholly on Your mercy, my only ſtrength ever ready to ſupport me. Thus having fought

courageouſly, may I be found at laſt worthy to receive from Your hand the Crown of Life! Amen.

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR SUPERIORS.

THere is ſufficient to terrify you in the Office you hold, although GOD Himſelf had called you to it. But it is far more to be apprehended, if you ſought it yourſelf. GOD uſually withdraws from the ambitious thoſe graces which are neceſſary to the diſcharge of their duties of office. They riſe to ſink again, their aſcent to honour, is commonly followed by ſome diſaſtrous fall that threatens the loſs of their ſouls.

A perſon only merits to govern by being fearful of governing. That Superior is unworthy of Authority who thinks herſelf worthy, and who confidently aſpires to it. But she is deſerving of command, who

although She be qualified for it, only from obedience; who exerciſes it with humility & apprehenſion, deſirous of being eaſed from her burden. Let her attend to the Rule of St. AUGUSTINE, and not think herſelf happy for enjoying power and authority; but for the apportunity of exerciſing charity in ſerving others; in comforting the dejected, in bearing with the weak & in having patience with all. willingly ſubmiting to correction but cautious, to adminiſter it. And let her behaviour, be ſuch as to be more loved than feared.

How happy would Saul have been, had he been contented with his Crook & never graſped the Royal Sceptre. In private life he might not have been guilty of that crime into which he fell, being King of Iſrael. His exaltation was the inſtrument of his ruin. The dangers that accompany a ſtate of ſubjection, are not comparable to thoſe that a wait Superiority. What

have not Superiors to dread from the unreaſonable demands, & the irregular lives of ſome of their ſubjects? To what dangers are they not expoſed either from, by too great indulgence, or from too great ſeverity. Saul, through timidity perferred the will of his people to that of GOD. AARON, by a weak compliance, forfeited the Divine favor- And MOSES was more than once tempted to yield to the unfounded complaints of a quarrelſome & peevish multitude.

We ought to decline that office, ſays St. CYPRIAN; for which we are not qualified. " *Virtutibus vacuus nec coactus accedat.* " If you have not ſuitable talents, do not accept it. And did you even poſſeſs theſe, you muſt not accept of it, but from compulſion & from a ſpirit of obedience. " *Virtutibus pollens invitus veniat.* " A Religious should tremble, when called to govern others. But she muſt acquieſce in the will of GOD, if He

calls her to Office. To refuſe to labour in the vineyard of JESUS CHRIST, would be no proof of your love to Him. What a ſubject of reproach to you, if under your direction, certain Souls would have ſanctified themſelves, but whereas by refuſing to undertake that direction, you have been the cauſe of their everlaſting ruin.

The Office you fill is as it were an inſtrument placed in your hands by GOD, for the ſalvation of yourſelf & of others. Make your office inſtrumental to both theſe ends. Rely not on your own ſtrength but only on the grace of GOD, in whoſe place you ſtand. He knows beſt what helps you want, place therefore your whole truſt in Him. The ſmall veſsel in which JESUS ſailed with His Apoſtles, was in imminent danger of being ſhipwrecked; but He preſerved it. Alſo if you liſten to the voice of Him, who called you into office, the dangers attending it will be diſſipa-

ted by Him, for whoſe honour & glory, & with no other view, you accepted it. If it be dangerous to accept a poſt in a Community, it is not leſs ſo, obſtinately to refuſe it. Therefore be not inflexibly bent on declining an office, but with a proper diffidence offer your ſhoulders to the burden which God is pleaſed to lay on them; He will be your ſupport. Nothing could be more ſimple or more uninformed, than the Apoſtles, when Jesus Christ made choice of them; not withſtanding which, they converted the World. God frequently uſes ſmall Inſtruments to work the greateſt wonders.

When you are raiſed to a dignity, caſt yourſelf humbly before God; put all your truſt & confidence in Him: be attentive to His inſpirations, cherish & entertain them by prayer. Go to Him to ask advice in your doubts, & beg He will Himſelf vouchſafe to be the guardian of the flock which He

has committed to you. Endeavour to be ſuperior to your ſubjects rather by your merit, than by rank. As you were choſen ſuperior on their account, think not of ſelf-intereſt, but only of their advancement in the way of virtue.

Conſider that you muſt one day be examined concerning the Souls intruſted to your care; whether they have made ſuch progreſs in the way of perfection as might juſtly be expected of them. Conſider that you are not ſo much raiſed above them to exerciſe your authority over them, as to aſſiſt & watch over them. Shew therefore always to them the heart of a tender Mother, particularly when they are indiſpoſed in body or mind. The more afflicting their care is, the greater claim they have to your attention. But at all times be careful that neceſſaries be not wanting to them. Liſten to their complaints, compaſſionate their weakneſs. Conſole them in affliction. At-

tend them in sickness " Bruise not " the broken Reed, nor extin- " guish the smoking flax." " Make yourself all to all, that you may gain all to JESUS CHRIST.

The duty of correcting & chastiting; is connected with your superioriship. Endeavour to acquit yourself of it in a proper manner, Mingle severity with sweetness. Shew yourself firm & resolute to delinquents.. Yet divest not yourself of compassion towards them. Like the good Samaritan administer Oil & Wine. Sweetness often cures those whom severity would render more obdurate. That you may discern what remedies are to be applyed by you to the different disorder of your subjects; consult often the sovereign Physician of Souls. Also in difficulties ask the advice of those Religious whom you know to be prudent & likely to have in them the spirit of GOD.

While you watch over others, attend well to yourself, as you

have two Eyes, let one of your Eyes be directed to the Community. And let the other be continually turned to yourſelf. A careful attention to the ſalvation of your ſubjects is properly ſpeaking an attention to the ſalvation of your own Soul. Let your manner of life be ſuch, as to ſerve for an example to others, & as a recommandation & ſupport of every virtue.

However disorderly & irregular a Community may be; no ſooner does the Superior begin to give good example to preach regularity by her conduct; & to importune heaven for the converſion of her ſubjects, than regular diſcipline is quickly reeſtabliſhed.

INSTRUCTIONS

FOR LAY SISTERS.

THoſe Religious Siſters who have ſanctified themſelves in your ſtate; had nothing in view but obe-

dience, for this they performed their works; after work, they gave themſelves to prayer. Such muſt be the tenor of your lives. You muſt obey, work & pray, both vocally & mentally. To none is recollection more neceſſary than to you. By your ſtate you are always obliged to work and often to go from home. You have therefore continual occaſions of diſtraction & diſſipation, & are conſtantly in danger of loſing a Religious & interior ſpirit, if you neglect the duty of prayer. You have this comfortable aſſurance that by performing the office aſſigned you, you practiſe the virtue of obedience. But that you may reap all the merit of this virtue from your work, you muſt perform it in the manner in which it is enjoined you to be done, that is, with joy, fidelity & alacrity; if any one of theſe conditions be wanting, you will find no comfort in the exerciſe of obedience. Do your alloted work willingly

lingly & joyfully, & for the love of God; if you do it otherwise your condition is little better than that of a slave; whom men compell by force to their task of labour. And if you shun labour, or if you work with slowness & negligence; you are as far guilty, as your negligence is hurtful to the community. Also if you waste & lavish the effects of your Convent; if you destroy any thing, or if you lose in talking the time which should be imployed in work; you are not only unfaithful, but you are injust. For such faults a servant in the World would be answerable; much more then a Religious, & one who has vowed Fidelity to the Convent.

We esteem him a good Servant, who is attached to the person & property of his Master, who executes his orders & intentions; now this affectionate fidelity is more necessary in a Convent, as it is the House of God. It is to deceive

yourſelf to imagine you did not embrace the Religious ſtate; to ſerve others. Your ſtate obliges you more to the office of MARTHA than to that of MARY. Nor muſt you refuſe to labour for the Religious becauſe in ſerving them; you ſerve GOD Himſelf. Nothing can be more honorable than ſuch ſervice. JESUS CHRIST ſays of Himſelf, that He came from Heaven not to be ſerved, but to ſerve others. Can you after this ſhun any office however humble? For GOD hath allotted to you the office with which you are entruſted. You muſt therefore perform it in the manner & with that fidelity & care which GOD wills you ſhould perform it.

Indolence & ſloth are the qualities of a bad ſervant. May you never betray theſe qualities! Follow not the example of others however ſenſible & eminent they may be thought; if what they do be contrary to the commands of obedience. If any one ſay, that in ſuch

a case you depend not on your Superior; let your answer be, that you are resolved to depend on your Superior in every thing; & that without this dependance it is impossible to enjoy peace of mind or tranquility of conscience. If it be said, that such is the custom, & that you cannot err in following it; answer with firmness; that at your Profession you Vowed obedience to your Superior, & not to custom. How many customs & practices have insensibly crept into Convents, which are real abuses?

It is an excellent maxim on all occasions, to conduct yourself as a true Religious; to do honor to the Religious state, & to lead an exemplary & edifying life. But if you are a Religious in appearance, without the interior spirit of your calling, what will become of you at the hour of your death, when the mask must fall off?

Shew always becoming respect to God's Ministers. Bd. St. Fran-

cis, who had the spirit of God; recommended nothing so strongly to his Brethren as to honor the servants of Jesus Christ. You must honor not only their personal merit, but you must also revere his Priestly Character. To honor them is to perform an act of religion, & of spiritual merit. What I say of Priests, may also be said of Superiors. These hold in your regard, the place of God. What respect, what reverence & submission do they deserve, whom God has charged to be your rulers & conductors! More over you ought to respect & to serve with willingness, every individual among your Sisters.

In every Convent, wherein Laysisters are punctual in performing their duties; they are esteemed & beloved by all. Superiors rejoice to have such in their Community; every good Religious rejoices to have such for companions: they themselves must be happy. If you

are not, complain not, say not, that you are hardly treated & dispised for being a Lay-sister. Acknowledge that you are justly dealt with, & that you are wanting in that Spirit of Religion which ought to animate you. Accuse yourself, & not your situation, nor others.

Chuse for your Patrons those who have sanctified themselves in your state; & endeavour to imitate them in every thing; & to conduct yourself as they did both in regard of your Sisters in religion, & of people in the world.

ASPIRATION.

I Acknowledge, O my GOD! that I have within myself a secret pride, which inclines me to esteem myself & to seek the esteem of others. If I search for the foundation of this pride, I find none. For what have I but my habit deserving of any honor or esteem? Why therefore am I still proud? I place myself on an equal footing

in every thing with others. I addreſs & anſwer all people indifferently & without diſtinction. I find in myſelf an impatience at ſubjection, at ſubmiſſion to others, & as ſtrong reluctance to renounce my will O my GOD! who haſt called me to this ſtate of humiliation & clothed me with this habit expreſſive only of ſimplicity & humility. Grant me I beſeech the this precious virtue of humility. I will never ceaſe to importune for this grace, of which I ſtand moſt in need. If humility is a virtue moſt neceſſary to all Religious, it is far more ſo to me; being the very foundation of my ſtate. Grant me grace to fulfill all the duties belonging to my ſtate; that ſo I may receive the reward promiſed to the good & faithful ſervant Amen.

PIOUS REFLEXIONS

AND

INSTRUCTIONS

Relating to different ſubjects; and may be read when the reading appointed for the day is too short. They will ſerve to renew afreſh in your mind the truths ſuggeſted in your Retreat.

I Diſcover within me, & have diſcovered from the firſt day of my retreat, a dreadful confuſion in the blindneſs of my underſtanding, & in the effects of my diſorderly paſſions of which I have been long the unhappy ſlave, and from which all the irregularities of my conduct have flowed; my inward blindneſs itſelf is ſo great that even it makes

me ſenſible of my wretchedneſs. Thus one night brings to me the knowledge of another; " *Nox* " *nocti indicat ſcientiam.*" Now I hope through the aid of Heaven and the benefit of my retreat, that this Darkneſs will be removed, and that the light of my Soul will be shining as the day. " *Nox ſicut dies* " *illuminabitur.* " But for this great change in me I ſtand in need O my God of the multitude of your powerful mercies, to diveſt me of the ſenſual, and to clothe me with the ſpiritual Man. Beſtow on me I beſeech You the grace and ſtrength neceſſary to effect it.

What anguish of mind would ſeize me, if I were to die this inſtant, and then to find I have lived ſo many years in this World, wherein I was only placed as a ſtranger or traveller not only without aſpiring to my laſt end, but continually removing farther and farther from it. I ſigh after peace of heart; but alaſs I ſeek it where

it cannot be found. My Heart was not made for Creatures, but for the Creator. I can never obtain reſt but by a perfect ſubjection of myſelf to the Divine Will. It is impoſſible I ſhould ever be at peace, except I perform that which He commands me to do. Can I ſay that I was then happy when I transgreſſed the obligations of my State? Oh! what ſorrow and anguish of mind did I ſuffer when I yeilded to my evil inclinations?

I lament that I ever complained of injuries or ill uſage, theſe were the mercies of our Lord upon me, who deſigned to humble me, to force me to enter into myſelf, and to conduct me to the perfection of my ſtate. Behold me O Lord proud and haughty as I was now humbled and reduced to the loweſt abaſement! *Humiliaſti ſicut vulneratum ſuperbum.* I cry unto thee ſpeak O Lord for thy Servant heareth. *Loquere Domine, quia audit ſervus tuus.* Behold me ready to execute what-

ever You shall command. Make me know your will that I may accomplish it. *Domine quid me vis facere?* Lord what will you have me do? Happily it requires; little trouble to know what You require of me. *Hæc eſt voluntas Sanctificatio veſtra.* Your will is that I should labor to ſanctify myſelf, by discharging all my obligations, both as a Chriſtian in keeping Your Commandments; and as a Religious in fulfilling my ſolemn vows, and to obſerve the Rules and Conſtitutions of our Order.

Every thing is made for ſome particular end, and when it answers not that end, it is good for nothing. A Kniſe is made to cut, & when it ceaſes to cut, it ceaſes to be good for any thing I was made to ſerve GOD; if I ſerve Him not, what am I good for? I am a barren tree, and can expect nothing but the fate of ſuch a tree, to be cut down and caſt into the fire.

The all powerful and Immenſe

Deity cooperates with me in all my thoughts, words, and actions, and procures from this cooperation infinite glory. I will every day labour together with him, in all my thoughts, words, and actions, and will give to him all the glory which this grace produces from them. when I recite the Divine Office or other devotions, I will offer all that the power of GOD performs in me, to his greater honour and praise, in conformity with his intentions and with those of JESUS CHRIST His only Son.

It is GOD only who warms me with the Fire, who nourishes me with Food, and who preserves me by the Air which I breathe, I ought always to have these thoughts in my mind, that by them I may constantly glorify GOD in all His Creatures.

Whether I am in one place or another, it ought to be indifferent to me, if in every place I find my GOD. He is every where the same

whom alone I muſt and will love. If the whole World eſteemed me, it would not avail to my eternal Salvation; if it hated me, it would be no obſtacle to it. What a ſubject of joy to me, to know that, amidſt all the Viciſſitudes of the World, I can work out my Salvation! Indeed in this matter, I can do nothing without GOD: and He will do nothing without my cooperation. He who made you without yourſelf ſays ST. AUGUSTIN, will not ſave you without yourſelf. O my GOD work in me and give me your grace, that I may in every thing labour, in concert with you, to accomplish your ever adorable will.

I know not if in the whole World there be found any one equally indebted to Divine grace with myſelf; and I am confident that no one has made a leſs grateful return. Should I at laſt be ſaved, which I confidently hope through the mercy of GOD, it ſeems as if no one

in

in Heaven ought to render greater glory to the Divine bounty than I. As much the greater, as my ingratitude has been: so much brighter will be the Triumph of the Divine Goodneſs in the forgiveneſs of my ſins. Yet I muſt not forget to make Satisfaction to Him whoſe mercies I have ſo long ſlighted, and who has hitherto borne this outrage to His mercy. Alaſs whatever I either can now do, or shall do in the whole courſe of my life, will never be an adequate ſatisfaction for my offences againſt the divine Majeſty. Yet will I notdeſpair; but will comfort myſelf with this moſt conſoling truth, that my juſtification depends not on my own exertions. But wholly on the merits of JESUS CHRIST, to whom alone I shall remain indebted for all eternity.

I every day commit ſome fault which deſerves at leaſt the flames of Purgatory, therefore I ought continually to make acts of Contrition for it, and to ſeize with ea-

gerneſs every occaſion of doing good, ſuch as of forgiving Injuries and gaining Indulgences, &c.

My proud and perverſe will is the only ſource of all my ſins. All the evils of this life are the effects of pride. None but the proud fall into ſin, and GOD to humble them, permits them to fall into ſins ſtill more shameful. Grant O my GOD, that my ſins may always ſerve to humble me.

All that GOD requires of me is included in the renouncing my own will, and in the entire ſubjection of myſelf to his Divine will. This I firmly purpoſe to do. If I meet with no great occaſions of ſelf DENIAL; I will at leaſt not omit ſuch smaller occaſions as will never be wanting to me in this Life.

As the magnitude of the Divine favours muſt aggravate the guilt of my ſins, ſo alſo the enormity of my guilt displays the extent of the Divine Beneficence. You have been good to me O my GOD! but how ungrateful have I been.

Could I form a conception of the favours of GOD, or of my own wickedneſs, it would not only afford me a pleaſure to be thus humbled, but alſo a ſecurity againſt pride. I will Therefore never ceaſe from making to GOD this prayer. "Lord let me know You, and » know myſelf." I could almoſt glory in my ſins, if by them I were to learn humility. Saint PAUL ſaid " *Libenter gloriabor in infirmi-* » *tatibus meis ut inhabitet in me* » *virtus* CHRISTI."

In reflecting on my good works I may perhaps be tickled with vanity; but in reflecting on my ſins I muſt learn to become humble and lowly. Thus pride changes good into evil; but humility changes evil into good.

Others know me better, than I know myſelf. They whom I conſidered as prejudiced againſt me becauſe they ſeemed to ſlight me, were they who knew me beſt. When they ſpoke evil of me, they ſpoke

not all, for they did not know the whole extent of my wickedneſs.

I am infinitely indebted to the goodneſs of GOD for having borne with me ſo long. Happy ſhall I be, if He beſtow on me ſincere contrition for my ſins, with a firm reſolution to begin a new life, and grace to put it in execution. Such happineſs I can only hope for from His mercy.

O infinite mercy of my GOD! how long have I neglected it, and reſiſted grace by committing ſin, and gratifying my paſſions? But may your accumalated graces, O GOD, compel my obſtinacy to yeild at laſt to the gentle violence of your Love, and may I no longer be what I have hitherto been!

At the hour of Death, the moſt painful thought to you will be that of your ſins. If GOD gives you more time, redeem the paſt by your good works, and be careful not to add to the heavy load of your guilt. If this has been enormous,

ſeek with proportionably greater ardor and confidence, the feet of JESUS, to caſt it there. It is to Him a greater object of mercy.

It is a folly to wish to live long if we do not alſo wish to live well. It would be an excellent practice on all days to aſſiſt at Maſs, and to perform every action as if it were our laſt. A day will come, which moſt certainly and moſt unexpectedly will be our laſt. This thought will furniſh a cogent motive for acting always with increaſing devotion and attention.

I know O GOD, and I find by melancholy experience. That I grow tepid and ſlothful, I am no longer ſuch as I was im my Noviſhip. Can I imagine that I have done ſufficient, and arrived at the ſummit of perfection? Yet I have received many graces, which I had not then received; and if I advance daily nearer to death, I ought alſo to advance with proportionate ſpeed in the way of fervour and

devotion. But alaſs, with the very firſt temptation that preſents itſelf, I forget all my good reſolutions, and why? Becauſe I live unrecollected and inattentive, ever diſtracted, and ever buſied with vain and impertinent objects.

I can never expect to die well if I be not now dead to the World, and entirely united to my God. In good earneſt and for love his, I will diſengage myſelf as far as poſſible from every thing. There is no better way of preparing for Death.

I ask not a long life O my God; only grant that it may be well ſpent and wholly conformable to your holy will however short it may be.

Too ſolicitous am I about my health, as if the preſervation of health were my motive for entering Religion. But the true reaſon why I engaged in this ſtate was that I might prepare for death, and might die to myſelf for Jesus Christ. Why am I not convinced that while I continue thus anxious

to preſerve my health, I never ſhall advance one ſtep in the way of perfection or of a ſpiritual life. The thought of death till now has been to me a thought of terror, which I have endeavoured to banish from my mind; but it is now to me a thought of comfort. Though I ought not to wish to die on this very day, yet would it give me no pain; and I could willingly reſign myſelf to death during my ſpiritual retreat, if it would to be the glory of GOD. Were it offered me to quit this World when I liked, I would decline ſuch an offer, and give myſelf wholy up to the mercies of GOD, confiding that He would cauſe me then to die, when it would be beſt for me. My great buſineſs is to perform now all my actions as I ſhall then wish to have performed them.

Since the World was before me, and will long ſurvive me, it has no need of me, nor am I at all wanted in it. If I can be in any degree ſer-

viceable on earth it is only by contributing to promote the glory of God. But even for this end, there will always be thoſe who will answer it better than I do.

To die in the Lord, I muſt firſt die to myſelf, and the World. "*Beati mortui qui in Domino moriuntur.*" He who is dead has neither joy nor ſorrow for any thing that may happen. Whether he be praiſed or deſpiſed, whether he be placed here or there, it is indifferent to him. This indifference should ever be in a Religious ſtate, to which my Vows have happily and indiſſolubly bound me.

Thouſands had they received the numerous graces beſtowed on me, would have correſponded with them far more carefully and more faithfully than I have done. Many of the Saints were never diſtinguiſhed by the graces which I have received. Theſe ought to have made an eminent Saint, and ſtill I am notwithſtanding a wretched and

miſerable ſinner. All this will be matter of dreadful inquiry at the day of judgement.

When I conſider O my GOD, in what manner I have ſpent my days, I am perfectly aſtonished! what work have I ever performed which can be deemed to have been perfect, which has not been vitiated & ſtained by ſome imperfection; How many works have I performed exteriorly good, but ſpoiled of [their] merit through my bad diſpoſition? My virtues themſelves have been frequently the offſpring of pride, for unhappily I have leſs deſired to be a truly good Religious, than I have deſired to appear ſuch. Thou O my GOD! haſt been the witneſs of all this vanity and hypocriſy; and thou alſo will be the ſevere judge of theſe crimes.

Yet though I may have ſcandalized others, through I may have been through bad exemple the occaſion of others being loſt, and have

deſerved Hell by my multiplied offences; I will not injure by my deſpair the infinite goodneſs of GOD, nor will I deſpond, while I have ſuch motives for confidence in the boundleſs mercy of my Creator.

I ought not to be offended with ſuch as are not friendly to me. If they ridiucle and contemn me; they only do me juſtice. He who is conſcious of having deſerved Hell; muſt confeſs that humiliations and contempt are due to him.

If Satan should attempt to perſuade me that I shall be loſt, I will answer him; that what ever the Divine decree may be in my regard; I profundly adore it; and under this general aſſurance that GOD will diſpoſe of all things to his greater glory and our greater good. If I am to be numbered among the reprobates, and if a time muſt come when I shall no longer be permited to love and adore my GOD, I will now love him to the utmoſt

of my ability, and ſerve Him with all the powers of my ſoul; becauſe I know him to be infinitely deſerving of the love of all creatures.

O my Lord JESUS CHRIST, thou art the GOD of all mercy and of all juſtice. How great has been thy mercy to me, in ſaving me from becoming the victim of thy juſtice? O my loving Saviour, ſince, thou art to me a tender Father inſtead of an inexorable judge, I will from this day love and obey you as the beſt of Fathers, and behave to you as the moſt dutiful of Children; through the help of your grace.

If I am ever ſo happy as to be of the number of the Elect, what a pleaſure will it be to ſee the bottomleſs abyſs far diſtant from me, where my portion would have been, if thy mercy had not ſaved me. On the other hand how tormenting would it be were I with the reprobates, to behold at a diſ-

tance the heavenly Paradiſe; which was prepared for me, if I had lived the life of a good Religious.

Although I were aſſured that all my ſins are pardoned, yet I ought never to interrupt the courſe of my penance till death, if it were only to honour the mercy, to ſatisfy the juſtice of GOD, and to preſerve myſelf from further offences.

Whatever be the auſterities of a Religious life, they will always appear ſupportable, when I reflect on that place of torment, wherein I ſhould have been confined, had not GOD preſerved me from it by His pure mercy.

The life of JESUS CHRIST is a model of the moſt exalted virtue. This I muſt endeavour to imitate, becauſe it is my duty. It is neceſſary, but to do this you O my GOD, muſt aſſiſt me with your Almighty hand; for I feel my utter inability to do any good, without the ſpecial aid of your grace.

I do not deſpair of attaining to the

the perfection of my ſtate; but this happineſs I muſt never ceaſe to ask of GOD. I will then inceſſantly pray; I will not ceaſe to pray till I ceaſe to live. The happineſs for which I am ſolliciting is ſo great, that whatever labours I ſuffer in the purſuit of it, I ſhall be moſt amply recompenſed by the acquiſition.

The life of JESUS CHRIST ſhall be the ſubject of my Meditation. It muſt be my model. In His life I ſhall find all that is neceſſary for my advancement in every virtue. In JESUS CHRIST I find nothing but humility, but in myſelf nothing but pride. Whatever pains I take to extirpate the ſin of vain glory, ſtill I find it lurking within me. What then muſt I do? I will hope in GOD; I will on every occaſion mortify my pride, humbly hoping that the grace of GOD will not permit me to be overcome by its wicked ſuggeſtions.

JESUS CHRIST is that divine ori-

ginal which the eternal Father has propoſed to me, that I may copy it in my life. I am therefore to copy His virtues; and as far as I ſucceed in tranſcribing in my own conduct the various virtues of JESUS CHRIST; ſo much the more ſucceſsful and exact will be my copy of Him.

Lord JESUS! I cannot of myſelf become the copy of your virtues: You alone can ſtamp on my heart the divine image of yourſelf.

At the day of Judment, the difference between the Elect, and the reprobates will be ſtriking and viſible. The Elect will be like unto JESUS CHRIST; whoſe life they have imitated; but very different will be the reprobates as they have led a very different life. On my ſucceſs therefore in imitating JESUS CHRIST depends my ſalvation. I muſt not, I cannot expect to be of the number of the Elect, only inas much as I endeavour to follow the example of JESUS CHRIST.

That which God desires I should imitate in His Divine Son is His humility, His meekness, poverty obedience, and all his other virtues. This He wills, this he commands, and knows I can not do it without His help. Therefore I must request of Him this help, and will request it of Him, as often as I repeat that petition contained in his own sacred prayer, "*Fiat voluntas tua*:" Thy will be done, In these terms will I request Him to accomplish His Divine will in me, and to bestow on me the grace of becoming humble, poor chaste, obedient, as Him self was, and as I ought to be by the imitation of Him.

I will follow my Divine Redeemer, whersoever he shall lead me, whether to mount Thabor, or to mount Calvary, I will study diligently His life, that I may imitate Him in His death. For He came into the world to teach me how to live, and how to die. His death was the most precious, as His life

was the moſt holy. How good is it to live and die with JESUS CHRIST.

What confuſion for me to behold the GOD of infinite Majeſty annihilating himſelf ſo for as to aſſume the nature of frail man, to aſſume the form of a ſinner, and to take up the load of our miſeries, to behold this and then to ſee a contemptible worm of the earth, elated as I am; with pride, thirſting for honour, ſighing after diſtinction; I feel within me an ardent deſire to become humble, becauſe humility is a favourite virtue of JESUS CHRIST. It is the more neceſſary for me, as I can do nothing without it. If I gain no other advantage in theſe eight days, I ſhall be content with this. It is a gift of GOD, and I expect it only from the merits of JESUS CHRIST, and from His continual exerciſe of the moſt profound humiliations.

If you think you can do ſomething for the glory of GOD, attempt it not before you have conſulted

Him byprayer. He alone can enable you to work for his honour.

God loves none but in Jesus Christ, His well beloved Son, and His living image. If you desire to be beloved of the Eternal Father; you must endeavour to unite yourself with Jesus Christ by an union of your heart and works.

It is sufficient for a man in the World to be poor in spirit, and disengaged in affection from riches: this is not sufficient for a Religious, she must forsake in some degree every thing in the world, to follow Jesus Christ who chose to live and die in poverty. Remember this you promised at your profession.

When you know that it is the will of God, you should perform such a thing, which is not to your inclination; from a motive of obedience be not disturbed. All that trouble which you experience in denying and overcoming your self, will be sufficiently repaid by the comfort of this reflexion; that you are doing the will of God.

Receive what comes from your Superior as from GOD. To do what is enjoined you, ought always to give you inward peace you cannot doubt but that the will of GOD is, that you should do what is enjoyned you.

On examining yourſelf if you find you do not poſſeſs any one virtue, I ſay not in a perfect degree, but even imperfectly, what ſhadow of pretence can you have to exalt yourſelf.

One great cauſe of tepidity in a Religious is, that she performs her duties without attention and merely through cuſtom. Therefore ſtrive for the future to maintain in all your works an upright and holy intention. That the moſt indifferent action of a Religious life may not be without merit, they ought to be done with a recollected mind, and be ſpiritualized, as it were, by offering them to GOD.

In the myſteries of the hidden life of JESUS CHRIST you may dis-

cover the ſecret pride of your heart, ſo careful as you are to perform certain works which have a glittering exterior and ſhew of piety, while you are negligent in performing thoſe which have no outward recommendation.

Endeavour to imbibe the ſentiments of JESUS CHRIST; that you may judge of things as he judges them, and that you may learn to conſider all that as mere vanity which tends not to promote your eternal happineſs.

Love nothing but what He loves; embrace with joy ſufferings and humiliations: in a word, do nothing but from the ſame motive and intention which directed Him to refer all his actions to the glory of His heavenly Father.

JESUS CHRIST exerciſed himſelf in humility, poverty, patience, mortification and obedience; that He might ſhew by His example your obligation to exerciſe the ſame virtue. This example ſhould

enable you to overcome all difficulties in practising them.

The conduct of Saint MARY MAGDALEN teaches you to assert your independence of human respects. Resolve never more to be influenced by them so as to omit that which you ought to do; or to do that which you ought not. There is no better way to preserve interior peace, than to despise the censures and opinions of Men.

She who desires to become a true servant of GOD: must not be disturbed, nor lose the peace of her mind on any occasion whatever. " *Pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis.* " Peace be to men of good will. " *Pax multa diligentibus Legem tuam.* " To him who loves thy law there is abundant peace.

Though genuine virtue does not consist in a tender sensibility of heart, you will to aspire to that kind of devotion which will most effectually conduct you to perfection, and if once you possess such a

devotion, be careful not to expoſe yourſelf to the danger of loſing it.

Devotion is often loſt for want of a ſufficient guard over your thought and ſenſes; you muſt continually watch over yourſelf; that your heart be not captivated, nor your mind diſturbed by ordinary employments. In theſe propoſe to yourſelf no other motive than the glory of GOD, who has placed you in ſuch a ſituation to ſerve Him. When you are about any work, and the law of obedience calls you to another place, quit your work immediately, and be aſſured it is not GOD's will that you ſhould continue it.

There is no honour in diſcharging the duties of the higheſt Offices unleſs it be done to pleaſe GOD. There is no diſhonour in the loweſt offices when they are adminiſtred for that end. Your perfection does not conſiſt in doing great or ſmall things, but in ſeeking to pleaſe GOD in what you do.

Be humbled when you reflect that you daily recite the praiſes of God and frequently receive the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, and are notwithſtanding ſo far removed from ſanctity, that you are covered with imperfections. Of this evil you are yourſelf the cauſe. Jesus Christ is willing to work wonders in you, if you will cooperate with his grace; but He will not compell you by force.

ASPIRATION.

O Divine Jesus, let me ſurrender my liberty into your hands, and root out of my heart all that is contrary to your will.

How happy are you to dwell under the ſame Roof with Jesus Christ in the Bleſſed Sacrament? Are you ſenſible of your happineſs? Are you careful to viſit Him, in all your neceſſities to have recourſe to Him? Why do you not fly to Him, that you may ſubdue your paſſions? Why do you not ſeek ad-

vice from Him, rather then from men? What Father is more tender, what Friend more faitful, than the Son of GOD is to you.

You ought to ſet a high value on prayer, beg of GOD the grace to perform it well. It is the beſt means to purify you from your faults, to unite you to GOD to unite Himſelf to you, that henceforward you may do nothing but what is for for His honour and glory.

ASPIRATION.

O My GOD! I ask not for extraordinary graces, conſolations, or ſupernatural underſtanding & ability; my only petition is, that I may render you all honour and praiſe, that I may be humble, may know You and know myſelf.

The greateſt Sacrifice that JESUS CHRIST made to the honour of His eternal Father, was that which He made in the Garden of Olives, by an entire and perfect reſignation of Himſelf to the Divine will. With

the ſame views, do you alſo unite your will to that of JESUS CHRIST; offer it to GOD as a burnt offering. What ever may befall you however contrary to your inclination, never ceaſe to cry out with your Saviour, "*Non mea, ſed tua voluntas fiat.*" May thy will be ever fulfilled, and not mine.

If you were able of yourſelf to make a perfect act of contrition, you would by it do away your ſins and merit Heaven. But this you cannot do; and muſt rejoice that you are thus dependent ſolely on JESUS CHRIST for your Salvation.

ASPIRATION.

O Eternal Father, I offer to thee, in ſatisfaction for all my ſins, that bitter ſorrow and grief which JESUS CHRIST underwent in the Garden of Olives for the ſins of thewhole World, and therefore for mine.

You ought to be very careful never to diſpiſe or contemn any one. When it happens that you are contemned

tempted or outraged, recollect at the ſame time, the outrage, which Jesus Christ ſuffered in His paſſion This Divine Saviour bore them all with exemplary patience; and is the ſervant greater that her Maſter.

Conſider that your Lord loaded with mokery and inſult, kept a profound ſilence; ought not you to be excited by His example and ſupported by His grace joyfully to undergo every kind of contempt and affront. It is true this is a ſingular grace which God beſtows on His greateſt Saints. You muſt however ſtrive eſpecially on common occaſions of trial to follow your Saviours example, and to conduct yourſelf with patience and reſignation. He will not fail to ſecond your endeavours.

You ought to deſire nothing more, than to be ever faithful to God, even in the ſmalleſt matters, as well in avoiding the moſt diſtant appearance of ſin, as in performing every duty with exactneſs.

ASPIRATION.

GRant O my God, that I may ſincerely bewail my want of fidelity, in your ſervice. With the aſſiſtance of your divine grace I am reſolved hereafter to be faithful and to become a perfect Religious.

Jesus Christ might have lived in the full enjoyment of honours and delights, and thus might have accomplished the Redemption of Man. One ſigh alone was more than ſufficient to reconcile the world to His heavenly Father. He would notwithſtanding ſubject Himſelf to bitter contempt and cruel torments. And ought not you, even though you could with equal certainty obtain ſalvation in the midſt of honours and pleaſures, as well as by the hardships of Religion to prefer the latter, and thus imitate your divine Redeemer and thus expreſs the ardour of your love?

Not only the ſoul was created

for Heaven, but the Body alſo will riſe again to the fruition of Eternal Glory. Therefore it is not ſufficient to ſanctify your ſoul the body muſt alſo be fitted for heaven by penance and mortification of the ſenſes. They have both been defiled by ſin, and our Lord has aſſured us that nothing defiled shal enter Heaven.

If at Death your ſoul be not polished, it muſt be cleanſed in the flames of Purgatory. You muſt prevent the ſufferings of your ſoul in purgatory by ſubmiting to a courſe of penance and coporal auſterity in this life.

If you are not couragious enough to undergo ſevere penances, you ought at leaſt to bear with patience all the adverſe incidents and mortifying contradictions of this life.

A Body that has long taſted of ſinful pleaſures and that has gratified its ſenſes with unreſtrained indulgence can not want of opportunities of ſuffering.

The ſcourges which rent the Body of JESUS CHRIST, the Thorns which pierced His ſacred head, ought to encourage you to bear with patience every kind of adverſity.

JESUS CHRIST was obedient unto death. Imitate His obedience, you did not embrace a Religious ſtate, that you might be retired, keep Choir, pray, meditate, and faſt, but that you might be obedient, might perform whatever is enjoined you and thus be obedient unto death.

Since all your works of penance are in themſelves very imperfect and of little value, you muſt offer them to the Eternal Father in union with the ſufferings of JESUS CHRIST. Exterior mortifications muſt be uſed with prudence; but that prudence you are not to learn from ſelf love.

ASPIRATION.

WHen shall I be able to utter with thoſe charming words. " *Mihi mundus Crucifixus eſt, & ego Mundo:* the World is crucified to me, and I to the World. I beſeech you; O my Saviour through the interceſſion of your holy mother, to grant me even now to pronounce thoſe words of your apoſtle with no leſs deſire than truth.

O bleſsed Vows, O bleſsed Rule! bleſsed Conſtitutions you are my croſs. In bearing this croſs I will live & die: May it be in ſuch a degree of perfection as GOD requires of me. O my GOD I wish to be holy, becauſe it is your will I beſeech you to enable me to arrive at that degree of ſanctity which you deſire I ſhould obtain.

If you have made a general Confeſſion; which is often done in your retreat, Conſider the infinite mercy of GOD, from whom you may hope to have received the requiſite

diſpoſition to render your retreat highly meritorious, and to enable you to diſcharge the enormous debt of your ſins. Pray for increaſe of grace by which you may quit your ill habits and be freed from the miſery of your former ſtate. Renew your good reſolutions, and the ſolemn vows you made at Baptiſm to renounce the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. Alſo renew the vows you made at the Altar when you embraced a Religious ſtate. Of perpetual Poverty, Chaſtity, and Obedience. Deſire to return to GOD in all ſincerity, and to continue ever faithful to his will.

O my GOD if you forſee I shall again offend you, in your mercy take me out of this life, which cannot be pleaſing to me, if I live to offend you. And if you prolong my days, grant they may be ſpent to your greater glory.

When you conſider how great is the glory, which GOD has prepared for His Elect, it should ſeem to you

temerity to expect it. What alone muſt comfort you, is that no one can be ſaved but through the mercies of GOD. And ſince you ought always to hope the mercies of GOD, through the ſame you may expect to be of the number of the elect in Heaven. Extol the mercies of your GOD as much as you are able; endeavour to cooperate with His graces. If you glorify him in this world. He will make you happy in the world to come.

It is not enough to have forſaken the world. You should moreover live without the leaſt tie or attachment either to the world, or auy thing created. You should depend only on GOD, ſeek only Him, and prefer Him to all things.

ASPIRATION.

BUT O my GOD, how can a frail creature arrive at this height of perfection? Without your ſpecial grace it cannot be done. I hope then and expect this ſpecial grace from you. O my GOD.

There is always danger, when you ſuffer yourſelf to be ſo far attached to any place or thing that you cannot quit it without pain. You muſt on ſuch occaſions be very watchful. One inordinate attachment is enough to ſuſpend the influx of that grace, which GOD would otherwiſe communicate.

The power of GOD has produced nothing greater or more beautiful than the Havenly Paridiſe; nor can the mercy of GOD do any more, than to beſtow it it on a ſinner miſerable like you. For undoubtedly your Salvation is an effect of this goodneſs of GOD. You are unable to arrive at Heaven, GOD will conduct you. Rejoice that your dependance is rather on his mercy than your own ability. The mercy of GOD will be the theme of your ſong in heaven. " *Miſericordias* " *Domini in æternum cantabo.*"

If you are ſo deſirous to preſerve a life, which is ſo short and full of miſeries, what ought you to do,

to obtain that life which is eternally happy. Do you expect to procure without labour that Glory, which the Martyrs, Confeſſors, and Virgins have all gained by ſo many painful combats?

You ought to value infinitely this ſtate of heavenly happineſs, though you can neither know, nor conceive the extent of this immenſurable and infinite good. Still one would think it appeared to you but of little value, ſince you care not to purchaſe it with the short labours of a pious life. Faith alone can rekindle your languishing fervour.

Jesus Christ warns you in His Goſpel, that the gate is narrow. Therefore to paſs through it, you muſt become little. May God grant you the grace to become ſuch by humility, and to narrow that Heart by compunction, which has been dilated by pride. It is a shame not to become holy with ſo many helps to holineſs. There is nothing in

your ſtate to hinder you from becoming holy. Mortify then that natural ſloth which deters you from practiſing virtue.

When you reflect on the happineſs of Heaven, why do you hate death, and love the preſent life? Do you think that the longer you live, you will be the fitter for Heaven? If this is you have ſome reaſon to be fond of life. But alaſs at the end of the Day have you not ſomething more to repent of than at the beginning of it?

You muſt not only labour for your own Salvation but alſo for that of others, particularly of all thoſe that are not your friends. How great will be your joy in Heaver when you find ſuch glorifying GOD for all eternity by your means, and by your prayers.

In whatever company you are, endeavour to render the converſation ſpiritual; and be careful not to ſay any thing but what is edifying. If GOD reigns in you, you

will be obedient to His Divine will, and will ſeek in all things to pleaſe Him; thus will you obtain perfect peace and ſerenity of mind.

ASPIRATION

O My God, as often as I ſhall recite that prayer which you have taught me, I will fervently pronounce that petition, " *adveniat* " *Regnum tuum* : " thy kingdom come.

You ought not to be jealous, though an other may be more able and more uſeful than your ſelf. On the contrary give ſincere thanks to God, for all ſuch as are better qualified, and have greater talents then yourſelf. This is the way to preſerve your heart in peace on many occaſions and to obtain an increaſe of Divine grace.

If our Lord conduct you in the path of bitterneſs and disappointment bleſs His holy name. For if you find it painful to diſengage your heart from the world when

you taſte nothing but bitterneſs, how would you become unattached and disengaged from the world, were it full of ſweetneſs. It is impoſſible truly to love God as long as you have an entire attachment to any thing, even to yourſelf. When you ſigh after the comforts of this world, it shews that you are ſtill full of yourſelf. This ſelf love is ſo deeply rooted in you that it inſinuates itſelf into every thing even into things which is moſt holy. You muſt reſolve to fight againſt it and reduce your heart to a ſtate of emptineſs, that you may fill it with the love of God.

God does not command you to dedicate to Him a portion of your heart, but to love Him with all your heart and ſoul, with all their powers and faculties. This compriſes every thing, and reſerves nothing I wish you could conceive the displeaſure which you occaſion in Almighty God, as often as you love

love any thing with Him and not ſolely for Him. By the dividing your affections you give a ſhare of that to the creature which ſhould belong excluſively to your Maker and your God.

The moſt unequivocal teſt of your love of God is an indifference to all places, to all offices, to health or ſickneſs, conſolations, or inclinations to life or death. But if you are troubled at any of the above mentioned events or ſituations, it is a ſign your heart is divided, and that your love of God is not genuine.

ASPIRATION.

ALaſs! how many paſſions hold the dominion of my ſoul? How many diſquietudes do theſe occaſion becauſe they are not ſubjected to reaſon. How many of theſe exerciſe over me a cruel tyranny. O my God I clearly perceive that I do not love you with an undivided affection. I will now break my

chains, and beſeech you to aſſiſt me with your grace.

The benefits which you have already received, thoſe which you every inſtant do receive, and thoſe which you ſtill expect from God are without number, and without value. O return Him daily thanks, There is no better way to invite Allmt God to beſtow His graces than a grateful heart, ever thankful and ever attentive to make a good uſe of favours already received.

When you paſs by a Church where Jesus reſides in the adorable Sacrement pay Him Your homage by ſome exterior mark of reſpect, alſo by the inward exerciſe of ſome act of virtue. Grieve not that He is inviſible to your ſenſes, ſince He has prounced thoſe bleſſed, who have not ſeen & yet have believed.

Every time you omit any point of duty or tranſgreſs your Conſtitutions you diſpleaſe God, becauſe you diſobey His orders. This conſideration ought to excite you to

exactneſs in all Religious obſervances, and to compunction for all paſt negligences. When you have juſt cauſe to be diſpenſed from any duty you muſt ask a diſpenſation from your Superior.

You need not ſtudy long to know what you are to do ſerve Almighty God. Above all you muſt follow your vocation, by obſerving your Vows, your Conſtitutions, and that with all the perfection of which you are capable. If you perceive that diſcipline is relaxed and that abuſes prevail, you al leaſt muſt endeavour to be punctual on all occaſions, and careful to do nothing contrary to the perfection of your ſtate.

" *Mortificatio maxima vita communis.* " It is a common and true ſaying that there is no greater mortification than that of a Monaſtic life. Uſe your utmoſt never to be guilty of any omiſſions; and as far as you are able comply with all the obſervances of your com-

munity both private and publick, with a ſcrupulous exactneſs.

Modeſty is a virtue which directs the exterior motions of the body in conformaty with good manners and which forbids every thing unbecoming your ſtate. This virtue is neceſſary to ſerve that GOD; in whoſe preſence you always are. You muſt attend to your outward deportment wherever you are; for it is impoſſible that your Interior be will ordered if your exterior be not well regulated. Modeſty is alſo neceſſary to the edification of your Neighbour. He cannot but be disedefied if your behaviour be looſe and irreligious. All other virtues may be private, it ſuffices if GOD ſees them. But modeſty muſt appear to the whole world according to the advice of St. PAUL; " let " your modeſty be made known " to all Men, " *Modeſtia veſtra no-* " *ta ſit omnibus hominibus.* "

In the Choir, Refectory, or Cell, in publick or private let your con-

duct be marked by a becoming propriety. The Apoſtle St. PAUL making ſome requeſt to the Corinthians, conjures them through the modeſty of JESUS CHRIST; " *Obſecro vos per modeſtiam* CHRISTI. " There never was a founder of a Religiour order who was not a moſt punctual obſerver of this virtue, and who did not earneſtly recommend it to his diſciples. St. FRANCIS in the third chapter of his Rule, " commands his Religious " to be modeſt, meek, and humble, to ſpeak and behave to each " other with proper decorum. " St. AUGUSTIN alſo in the 7th. chapter of his Rule writes thus : " Let " nothing appear in your walk, in " your ſtanding, in your Habit, to " whole exterior, which may offend the eyes of any one; but " only what is becoming the ſanctity of your profeſſion.

It is with reaſon that theſe great Men, endowed with the ſpirit of God, have been ſo careful to in-

ſtill into their Religious a love of modeſty. Theſe ought to be known more by their Religious behaviour, than by their habit.

The Rules of modeſty relate cheifly to ſmall matters, yet ſuch wherein it is difficult not to fail. Be not loud either in your ſpeech or laughter, ridicule not the defects of others. Walk with a decent rather then graceful movement, gaze not idly about you; but maintain in your look and whole exterior an air of compoſure without affection. Be not greedy at your meals. It may ſeem unneceſſary to recommend temperance to Religious, who faſt much and eat not between meals. But ſince it will be one day required of Religious, to have out done men in the world as far in temperance as in all other virtues, they muſt be temperate not only at meals, but even in the Infirmary either for the recovery of their own health, or in their attendance on the

ſick, and in particularly hard labour; for on theſe occaſions they are diſpenſed from the obſervance of the Rule in regard of eating, and are under no reſtriction but from the virtue of temperance. As to the uſe of wine, they whoſe parents in the world are opulent, may expect a greater allowance. To theſe I cannot indeed object thoſe words of the Rule. " They muſt not ſeek " to have in the Monaſtery, that " which they were not able to enjoy in the world. " But I muſt remind them that they are now Religious, and have by their Profeſſion renounced all ſenſuality, to which wine adminiſters not a little.

Nature and a good education help much to form the exterior of a Religious. However that which nature denies muſt be ſupplied by virtue.

In converſation obſerve the rules of charity applicable to your State. In the diſcharge of your Office remember what your rule en-

joins; They shall ſerve their Siſters mildly without murmur.

Your exterior will never be well regulated without a proper regulation of your interior on the motives of fear and love. Behave in all places, and on all occaſions, as if you were ſeen by all the world. The eye of GOD is always on you.

Willingneſs, or readineſs, of itſelf is of no great value; but accompanied by other good qualities it is both valuable and beneficial. It makes ſupportable all the duties of our State or Office. They who perform their duties with promptneſs and willingneſs, are uſeful and deſirable members of a community, are ever ready to undertake the loweſt employments in the Convent.

As to the Divine ſervice, omit not Choir, or maſs, Meditation, viſit to the Bleſed Sacrement, Grace at Table, Angelus, &c.

Meekneſs is a virtue that reſtrains anger, and moderates haſty

words or actions. Attend to the practice of it. It will excite you, not only to forgive an injury, but to feel the exalted pleasure of returning good for evil.

Silence is a virtue peculiar to Religion, and a powerful help to prayer and recollection. The ancients regarded all noise as a breach of silence, and would have a stillness to reign undisturbed in every Monastery. Saint James says, that Man's religion is false who does not bridle his tongue. Whence you may learn how great is the necessity of watching your words. An indiscreet word may be the cause of much sorrow, and can never be recalled. Idle words must be accounted for; and such as are indifferent, are less beneficial than silence.

Your conformity to the will of God, is to the measure of your perfection? sanctity does not consist in fasting, mortification, prayer, &c.

But in following for our holy

rule, the will of God. While you diveſt not yourſelf of your own will, nor ſubject it entirely to the divine will, you advance not one ſtep towards perfection. Receive every thing as coming from the hand of God. Be convinced of theſe two truths; that nothing happens without the expreſs permiſſion of God, & that what he permits, is a ſpecial effect of his attention to your good.

Faith; that ſupernatural virtue, is the gift of God, and abſolutely neceſſary to pleaſe, Him. The Pagans poſſeſſed many moral virtues, courage, conſtancy in adverſity contempt of riches &c. But unenlightened by Faith, they directed not their works to the glory of God & therefore merited not a ſupernatural reward.

Not to loſe this heavenly gift, make frequent acts of Faith & govern yourſelf in all things, by the maxims of Faith and not of human policy.

Hope is a virtue & gift of God, by which we are raiſed to a firm and lively expectation of eternal happineſs, and of all the neceſſary ſuccours in this life to attain it. This virtue is founded upon the infinite mercies of Almighty God, who both can, & will be our ſalvation, and who cannot deceive us in His promiſes. This virtue is abſolutely deceſſary to ſalvation.

Render thanks therefore to God, for beſtowing on you this ſupernatural virtue; without which you would life in diſpair, like one infallibly & irrecoverably loſt. Never, yeild either to dejection or preſumption. If you have hitherto led a ſlothfull tepid life, hope with Gods grace to amend it. You are obliged in conſcience to exerciſe this virtue, eſpecially when you are afsaulted with temptations, or when you are in any diſtreſs. Let this hope animate you to bear pain & encounter every difficulty for the attainment of eternal life. To

what hardships do worldly men ſubmit for ſome perishable gain, or a precarious ſubſiſtence?

Charity is that lovely gift of God, & excellent virtue, by which we love God above all things, & our Neighbors as ourſelves. Do you always prefer the glory of God to your own intereſt & pleaſure? Let love excite your heart to ſorrow, when you have offended Him The martyrs ſacrifiſed their lives to charity. Are you ready to do for his love that, which by Religion you are bound to do. What shame! that worldlings should do, & ſuffer more for the acquiſition of tranſitory good, than you are willing to do & ſuffer for the love of God.

Prudence, is a virtue which makes us perform all our duties with circumſpection, & which direct us to the choice of proper means to obtain the noble end we have view.

Fortitude, is a virtue which renders the ſoul courageous & reſolute, to ſubdue all puſillanimity and

and fear, that may impede her progreſs in the path of duty. It is abſolutely neceſſary to a Religious, that she may advance in perfection Through numerous difficulties and croſſes, & that she may arrive at the kingdom of Heaven; which is impoſſible unleſs she does violence to herſelf, by reſiſting temptations, by ſuffering patiently ſpiritual dryneſſes of ſoul, & in prayer &c.

You muſt reſolutely ſuppreſs the emotions of your paſſions, and above all endeavour to overcome your predominant paſſion. For all this Fortitude is neceſſary. The practice of this virtue is requiſite chiefly in adverſity. It prevents you from betraying any mark of ſadneſs in your exterior, whether on great or ſmall occaſions, ſuch as of heat, cold, ſickneſs, pains, indiſpoſition, which are of all trials the moſt oppoſite to your ſelf love. It alſo provents you from shewing any diſſatisfaction at the

converſation of thoſe, with whom you wish not to converſe, Fortitude is requiſite to execute your good purpoſes, and to raiſe you above the vain fears of, *What will they ſay*, in short, to free you from that moſt degrading ſlavery, to the opinions & humours of men.

Reflect a little on the courage with which you forſook the world, your Father, & Mother, whom you ſo tenderly loved, the pleaſures of life, your liberty, & proſpect of worldly advantage which are ſo alluring; and blush to ſee your preſent indolence & lukewarmneſs, to ſee your want of ſufficient courage to deſengage yourſelf from certain partialities, certain follies & from a regard for the vain opinions of men.

When you remember how ſtrict an account GOD requires of the talents He has given to his ſervants; conſider how little uſe you have made of thoſe which He has beſtowed on you. Have you not bu-

ried them? Have you employed them for his glory; or for his displeasure? Do you give to works of piety a proper portion of your time? Seek not in your actions the praises of men, nor depend upon your own qualifications, but wholly confide in God.

Are you wholly His, as much as when you gave yourself to him at your Profession? Do not gratify your passions, your ambition, your hatred, envy, sloth, &c. But strive to please God, & to mortify your passions for the love of him.

Never say that which tepid persons are forever saying. This is not of obligation..... There is no sin in doing this; rather exert yourself to maintain conventual discipline at all times & in all places; that you may promote the honour of Religion, & may express your gratitude to God for having called you to a state in which He has instructed & formed you to virtue; and if you be faithful he has promised you eternal life.

If the habit of Religion procures you respect, exercise yourself in humility.

Be ever ready & diligent to serve in the most painful offices; be obedient in what is enjoined; prefer the common good to your own, nor complain when customs are abolished that tend to relaxation, nor give support to such by your conduct.

Let justice & charity regulate your behaviour towards Superiors, equals & inferiors. Charity requires of you to compassionate the weak, to be tender & kind to every one. Justice requires that you give good example to all.

Be punctual in performing the duty of your office, without partialitily or favour. Take not the best for yourself & leave the worst for others. Give your vote, when asked, for the person that is best qualified & most worthy of promotion. Deceive not yourself in this point which is highly important &

on which ſo much depends. You may eaſily by it commit an injuſtice both to the perſon concerned, & to the community at large.

Temperance is a virtue of which the object is to govern the paſſions & ſenſes & to controll the appetite in the hour of temptation, that both the ſenſes & paſſions may be in ſubjection to the ſpirit.

Temperance is not only to be practiced at your meals, but alſo in regard of ſleep, & of all the conveniencies of life. You muſt never commit intemperance in any thing; neither in your looks, your ſpeech, nor your hearing.

Be not over ſolicitous about your health, nor anxious leſt Religious auſterity should injure it. An abſtemious & regular life, is more conducive to health than moſt people beleive..

Wish not to know what men ſay or think of you. This will either perplex or flatter you. It will certainly diſtract you and diſtturb the peace of your mind.

Sigh not after the perishable things of the earth: these are unworthy the love of a soul Created for the enjoyment of eternal goods. Why should you set your heart & mind on such things? Will they not be the same at the hour of death as they are now? And if then you will despise & consider them as vanities, why do you now not form the same judgement? While you live; be wise & esteem them now as you will in that hour of terror.

In the name of GOD, says a holy Prelate (*) writing to a religious woman. "Use all your efforts to bear without murmur, whatever „ is displeasing to you."

To serve GOD is solely to labour for his honour & glory. Have you been careful, conformable to St. PAUL's advice. To do all for the Glory of GOD.

Religion is the school of hu-

(*) Mont. De la Motte Bischop of Amiens.

mility. In it learn to be humble, to be the first to ask pardon when you ought to do it, & to be ready to aknowledge your faults. Think not you are injured, if you are not preferred; nor imagine you are an advantage to the community; rather fear lest you should be a burthen to it: for Religion only wants pious & humble members. When an humiliating action offers itself for you to perform, omit it not yourself, that your younger sisters may do it; but gladly embrace this occasion of humbling yourself. Beg of God the grace of humility; for without it, all other virtues are but the occasions of pride. If you have performed a work greatly meritorious, how far may you take complacency in it? So far only as an instrument in the hand of a skilful artist; or as a child writing a fair copy' while his hand is guided by a master: all that is excellent, comes from the master, all that is faulty from the child.

The rule of brotherly love requires, that you always behave to others, as you would have them to behave on similar occasions towards yourself. This you are taught by nature & Reason. However if you act only from the impulse of nature, you do no more than a Heathen might do. In reproof use not words of anger nor terms of reproach, but be mindful of that regard for your Sisters which must not be forgotten, even by the Superior, That love which is enjoined us by the new commandment of JESUS CHRIST, is such a love; a love of our neighbour as our Lord shewed to us. Visit the sick to comfort & exhort them, not to idle away your time without advantage.

Sincerely love all your Religious Sisters without exception of any. As in Faith by disbelieving one article, you violate the duty of believing GOD's Word; so also you violate charity, if you except but one from your love. Do you love

from mere humour, or any other natural motive, or purely for the love of GOD? ... A Crucifix of wood, is as worthy of your veneration as one of gold; since both equally bear the image of JESUS CHRIST; so you should equally love the poor, the rich, your foe, & your friend, as far as they all equally bear the Image of GOD. Beseech JESUS CHRIST to give you a new heart, a heart full of charity. And make a firm purpose to keep peace & concord with all, even with such are not themselves peaceable " *Cum his qui oderunt pacem, eram* „ *pacificus* : " & forget not to pray for all those who have ever offended you.

To be truly poor, a Religious must not only despise all that is contrary to holy poverty, but should also entertain a particular affection for this virtue, JESUS CHRIST has pronounced. " Blessed are the poor „ in spirit. " You give a proof of your love of poverty, when with

a ſpiritual joy you embrace the occaſions of practiſing it, for His love, who became poor for your ſake. Do not ſeek ſuperfluities, that is; more than neceſſity requires; & as to your cell, books, habit, & other things for your uſe, deſire not what is beſt & moſt coſtly, nor deſpiſe that which is mean & poor.

Even in ſickneſs remember you have vowed poverty, & complain not if anything be wanting to you. Are you now as poor as you will wish to be at the hour of death? Do you obſerve that poverty which you promiſed our lord that you would for His ſake.

How many things do you now conſider as neceſſary which will appear to you in your laſt moments, to have been mere ſuperfluities. At that hour you will wish to have ſuffered for the ſake of holy poverty, what men in the world ſuffer in the perſuit of riches. Be not of thoſe who ſuſtain all the inconveniencies of poverty without any

degree of merit, becauſe they conſider it as a great evil that they should want the leaſt convenience, of how many things are not even the rich in want of in the world? what kind of poverty is that where a man wants nothing? is that the poverty our holy founder has with ſuch earneſtneſs recommended to his followers? If in all things you ſeek the eaſe & comforts of the rich, how can you expect the reward which JESUS CHRIST has promiſed to the poor. Learn therefore to cherish & eſteem that poverty which is the diſtinguishing mark of the Diſciples of JESUS CHRIST.

By the vow of obedience, which you made at your profeſſion, you not only offered to GOD your exterior, to do outwardly all that your Superior should ordain; but the principal oblation which you made was of your interior; of your will, underſtanding, judgement, inclination, & the love of yourſelf.

For in this consists genuine Religious Obedience; & by this it is distinguished from the obedience of slaves.

Desire not those Superiors who are not careful to maintain regularity; but esteem such who are strict observers of the rule & constitutions, & who use their endeavour that all should punctually observe monastic discipline: From these procure for yourself no exemptions; God said to Samuel, (speaking of the Israëlites) "They who hearken not to you; have rejected, "not you but me." Examen whether you perform your duty rather from some human motives, than from that of Obedience?

Overcome the natural repugnance you feel to obey, let it not appear in your exterior behaviour that you obey with reluctance.

Superiors are not Angels, they have their weaknesses & defects; & it would be a folly to think that they are priviledged from sin. Still you

you must recognizes GOD in their persons, and his authority in them who holds his place.

Obey your Superior not only from human respects but be ever ready to execute her will without waiting till she expresses it to you by her commands. Be equally obedient to all Superiors, to the lowest as well as the highest. The truly obedient fulfill with readiness & alacrity all that is commanded them, knowing that the voice of their Superior is the voice of GOD. Quit therefore when required every thing in the instant lest you loose by the delay of a single moment, the whole merit of obedience. Animate your works with this thought that you have renounced your own will for GOD's sake.

Obey the more readily, when that which is commanded is opposite to your inclination and take JESUS CHRIST for your model, who for love of you became obedient even to the Death of the Cross.

Therefore obey as a loving ſon obeys a Parent. Adore the ſecret judgments of God in ſuch things as appear contrary to your reaſon; and obey for the ſake of pure obedience. If you really doubt of the lawfulneſs of the injunction, humbly ſpeak your ſentiments, but with an entire indifference and reſignation of your own will.

Be never diſcontent, but always ſatisfied, Obey in all places, at all times, as well in little, as in great Matters, whether theſe be pleaſing, or unpleaſant to you, provided only that God be not offended. In doubtfull caſes rather ſubmit to your Superiors ſentiment, than follow your own judgment; for if there be any thing wrong in what is commanded, your Obedience will always be pleaſing to Him, if you perceived not what was wrong.

You do not obey from a motive pleaſing God, when you are only obedient, as far as your own reaſon and judgment Inclines you. I ſay

more; a Religious who is truly obedient, does not only obey Superiors in every thing, but is also obedient to every Superior, of whatever temper, or disposition they may be " *Non tantum bonis & modestis, sed etiam discolis.* "

For you must not only obey the good, but even they who are not good; whether they are prudent, or imprudent, perfect or imperfect. For you obey them, as holding the place of GOD, who always requires the most perfect submission, however undeserving she may be who commands in His Name.

If you have not the virtue of Obedience, you have in you nothing of a good Religious, and GOD will reject your offerings, all your fasts, your austerities, and prayers, because you neglect to perform His Holy Will, that you may follow your own.

Since you have been a Religious, how many true and perfect acts of Obedience have you per-

formed? Alas! How humiliating is this reflection to you? Make a firm purpose to repair your past faults by the most perfect submission and Obedience, on all occasions.

As you have nothing about you, which does not lead you into Sin, your mind, will, memory, and senses being all polluted with the venom of concupiscence, nothing can be more advantagious, or more becoming to a Religious who aspires to the perfection of her state then continaul mortification; that she may be able to say with the Apostle, "She bears in her members, the » mortification of JESUS CHRIST."

Mortify your senses restraining them and not allowing them too great liberty, especially in dangerous occasions; shutting your Eyes to all objects, which you are not permitted to desire, and when you find yourself tempted by curiosity, that implacable enemy of mortification and recollection.

Let not your Ears attend to diſcourſes prejudicial to virtue; Keep your Tongue from uttering any word, that is unbecoming your ſtate, or that may be in the leaſt hurtful to the reputation of your Neighbour. Indulge not your taſte in every nicety. As your ſenſes are the openings, through which the Devil inſtills the poiſon of ſin into your Soul, ſet over them a ſtrict watch. A true Religious and penitent, avoids not only all ſinful pleaſures, but ſhuns alſo everything that is gratifying to her ſenſes.

Remember you muſt alſo, mortify the ſpirit, you muſt reſtrain its too exceſſive activity, and it's ſelf ſeeking. Reject all thoughts that diſturb your recollection or that baniſh from you the remembrance of the Divine preſence. A Religious muſt not permit her mind to be occupied, only with thoſe things that lead her to GOD. Conſider that you are, by a peculair favour of GOD, withdrawn like Lot from Sodom,

to betake yourself to the Mountain, that you may be saved from the iniquity of the world. Therefore cast not a lingring wishfull look behind you.

It is an Oracle of Eternal Wisdom, that who are faithful in little will also be faithful in great, and such as are unfaithful in small things, will also be negligent in the most essential matters of salvation. The whole obligation of a Christian or Religious is comprized in these two points " *Diverte à malo*, " *& fac bonam*," Shun evil and do " good? With what fidelity, do you avoid the smallest faults? Are Distractions and evil thoughts instantly rejected by you? What fidelity do you shew in the observance of order? And in the practice of virtue? This is requisite for edification.

The fidelity you owe to your profession, obliges you to fly from all worldly curiosities, when you are within the reach of enjoying

them. It is a ſcandal to the world, to ſee Religious continually at the windows on ſuch occaſions.

As great miſchief often ariſes from a ſingle ſpark, ſo do you expoſe yourſelf by this curioſity to ſevere temptations. The water which enters by degrees into a veſſel, not being carried off or emptied; cauſes the loſs of the veſſel.

The fall of many great men, both in the new, and old teſtament; which is a ſubject of aſtoniſhment to us; firſt began from ſmall faults, If they had been vigorous in overcoming the firſt temptation which they might with eaſe have vanquiſhed, they would perhaps have triumphed over all aſſaults, a good uſe of the firſt grace which they received, would have procured them many others, ſtill more powerful. At firſt arrives a mere thought, then a ſtrong impreſſion, then pleaſure and delight; and laſtly a full conſent of the will. By this proceſs, thoſe words of

the Holy Ghost are verified; " *Qui* " *spernit modica paulatim decidet.* " " He who neglects small faults, " will fall into great ones."

Of Religious who have been lost you will scarcely find one, whose ruin proceeded not from the neglect of small faults.

Reflect on your infidelity in regard of your Vows, of your Rule and Religious practices. How have austerities either of the order, or of your own choice been complied with?

God desires not great things from you, but that you perform what you do, with great exactness, and with an ardent love of Him. One is the proof of the other.

To love God is to be faithful in everything. For he is without love, who is without fidelity. Remember you will be examined with what perfection you have performed the duties of your state, whether a Superior or a subject, a Choir or a Lay Sister.

Grieve for paſt faults, and be careful to avoid them for the future, that ſo you may deſerve the happineſs of hearing from your Eternal Father theſe conſoling words, " Well done good and " faithful Servant, becauſe thou " haſt been faithful over a few " things, I will place thee over " many; into the joy of thy Lord."

Vidi. Datum Brugis hâc 28 *Auguſti* 1792.
L. A. CAYTAN, Can. Lib. Cenſ.



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